I am not Black! I am *Negro*!

Racism and Racial Identities in Brazil

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SUMMARY

Why are there no overt racial conflicts and little interest in political mobilisation along racial lines in Brazil? This question was the outset of this dissertation. Many social scientists argue that the myth of racial democracy has rendered the black population unconscious about racism and racial discrimination. This in turn is taken to be the reason for why the Black Brazilian Movement has not been able to mobilise politically along racial lines. I, on the other hand, argue that lack of consciousness alone can not count for the absence lack of racial conflicts and political mobilisation. This dissertation is based on fieldwork in Salvador, Brazil from January 2005 to June 2005. My data suggests that there is no lack of consciousness regarding racism among Afro-Brazilians in their 20s and 30s in Salvador. So, if there is no lack of consciousness what is it that prevents these people from participating in political mobilisation along racial lines? This dissertation seeks to find some answers to this question. By presenting their views their views on racism, their ways of resistance and their attitudes towards Afro-Brazilian culture and negritude (blackness), I hope to shed some light on why these young Afro-Brazilians do not feel compelled to join the Black Movement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Why are there no overt racial conflicts and little interest in political mobilisation along racial lines in Brazil? This is the key question that researchers on racial relations in Brazil seek to answer (Sansone 2003). Many social scientists draw the conclusion that the myth of racial democracy has rendered the black population with a false consciousness (or without consciousness) as to their marginalised position in the Brazilian society. I agree that the myth has been, and still is, a powerful ideological weapon. On the other hand, I do question the conclusion drawn by many social scientists where the myth of racial democracy is so socially effective that it alone is responsible for the absence of racial conflict (Skidmore 1993 in Sansone 2003, Winddance Twine 1998, Hanchard 1994). Through this dissertation I will present data, that on the contrary to what is concluded by many social scientists, indicates that among the afro-Brazilian population in Salvador there is no lack of consciousness concerning racism and racial discrimination. So, if lack of consciousness is not the sole reason for the absence of racial conflict and political mobilisation, what could it be? I sought to find some answers to this question by focusing on afro-Brazilians in their late 20s and early 30s from the lower economical classes in Salvador. By presenting their views on racism, their ways of resistance and their attitudes toward afro-Brazilian culture and *negritude* (blackness), I hope to shed some light on why these people do not feel compelled to join the black movement in their political mobilisation along racial lines. I will apply the framework of Roberto DaMatta where mediation between poles is seen as fundamental to an understanding of what he calls the socio-logic of Brazil. His framework will give a better insight into the paradox of why there are no overt racial conflicts despite the everyday reality of racism.

Region: Latin America and Brazil

Latin America

Latin America as a region is characterised by both similarity and diversity. The countries in the region were all colonised by the Spanish and the Portuguese, and are on several levels linguistically and culturally homogenous. On the other hand, there are great variations between the countries in relation to composition of population, ecology and different economic development (Archetti and Stølen 1994). The region is further characterised by great social inequality, where the majority of the population is found living in poverty. The dominating religion is Catholicism, although the local practices are a lot more open to syncretism than the European Catholicism (Archetti and Stølen 1994). Anthropological

research and studies carried out in Latin America have been very diverse and covered many areas. It has focused on processes of social change, peasant- and complex societies (Wolf 1966) and social and cultural integration and differentiation. It spans from studies of Indians in the Andes and the Amazon (Chagnon 1983) and patron-client relations to racial relations (Wade 1997, Reichmann 1999, Winddance Twine 1998). Further, there are studies on cultural syncretism, poverty culture (Scheper-Hughes 1992), causes for, or consequences of, modernization, industrialization and urbanization. Studies on race relations and ethnicity have centred on the mestizo culture and ideologies that are present in almost all of the countries in the region (Wade 1997). Brazil, in particular, has been a much used comparison with the United States on the issue of race relations and most of the studies of blacks in Latin America have also centred on Brazil because of their large black population (Wade 1997).

Brazil

Brazil differs from the other countries in the region because of its vast territory and a large population of descendants of African slaves. It is also the only Portuguese speaking country in Latin America. Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world with a population close to 185 million[1]-the second largest population in the Western hemisphere (Hess & DaMatta 1995) that covers 3,286,488 square miles (Skidmore 1999). Brazil encompasses almost half of South America, and bordering all other countries in the region except Ecuador and Chile. It is also the country with the largest social inequalities despite its enormous territory and vast natural resources. The wealth is not only unevenly distributed between the social classes, but also between the different regions of the country. Historically and population-vice the country has alot in common with the Caribbean region (Sansone 2003). Both countries are former societies based on sugarcane plantation economy where slaves were brought in as working force. The large black population is another common factor between the two countries.

In studies of race relations, Brazil has been very important as a comparison to other countries that also have large black populations. In particular, Brazil has worked as a kind of oppositional image to race relations in the United States (Sansone 2003, DaMatta 1995, Hess 1995). Up until the II World War Brazil was seen as a racial paradise where racism and racial prejudices did not exists (Reichmann 1999), and class was perceived as the most important explanatory factor of social inequality (Sansone 2003). In the last decades, however, social

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[1] Numbers are collected from IBGE; instituto brasileiro de geografia e estatisticas (Brazilian Bureau of statistics) (November 2006).

and political scientists have analysed and documented racism and racial inequality in many areas of the Brazilian society such as the labour market (Hasenbalg & Silva 1999), social relations, social mobility, level of education and literacy, woman in the labour market (Lovell 1999), residential segregation by skin colour (Telles 1999), media representation and popular culture (Sansone 2003). The paradox of the absence of overt forms of racial conflict and mobilisation on the basis of skin colour, or race, despite an extensive body of literature that has unveiled racism and racial inequality in Brazil, has often been contributed to the social effectiveness of the myth of racial democracy (Sansone 2003). According to the myth there can be no form of racial discrimination as all Brazilians are a result of centuries of miscegenation (racial mixing), and basically the Brazilian people are a mixture between Indians, Blacks and Whites. It is believed that there is a complementary relation between the races where the Brazilian rhythm and happiness is seen as "black", the synchronizing with nature as "indian" and the "white" language and social institutions as the catalyst that combines all the aspects (DaMatta 1995). If Brazil is a racial democracy, why is the majority of the population that constitutes the lower classes blacks? Why is the Afro-Brazilian population absent from positions of power? And why is it necessary to implement affirmative action at the universities to combat social inequality? These are some of the questions that motivated me to look at racism. This dissertation places itself in the line of research on race relations that denies the existence of a racial democracy in Brazil. However, I do not see the myth as the sole explanatory factor to the absence of racial conflict and the lack of support for the black movement. I argue that young afro-Brazilians in Salvador do not suffer from a false consciousness in relation to racism, and that they are aware of the implication of racism in regard to social upward mobility. Their lack of interest in joining the black movement can not be contributed to being blindfolded by the myth of racial democracy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND ANALYTICAL TOOLS

Roberto DaMatta is one of the most influential social scientists focusing on Brazilian culture. His theoretical framework and interpretations of the Brazilian society and culture is built on two of Louise Dumont's key concepts; hierarchy versus equality and holism versus individualism. DaMatta has modified these concepts, and by adopting and using Dumont's idea of encompassment in a new manner he demonstrates how the traditional and hierarchical includes the egalitarian, modern and individualistic cultural forms (Hess 1995). By applying this framework to the Brazilian society DaMatta rejects arguments about the existence of two different Brazils; where one is traditional and localised in the lower social classes and in rural

areas, while the other is modern and localised in the upper social classes. DaMatta argues that Brazil is both traditional and at the same time modern. There is no either or, but both at the same time. Brazil is an intermediary society, and to show this constant negotiation between the modern and the traditional DaMatta applies Victor Turners theory of social dramas. Social dramas and rituals become situations where society shows its true face, and DaMatta's most famous analysis of such a social drama is the one of the Brazilian Carnival in "Carnival, Rogues and Heroes" (DaMatta 1991). In my opinion, DaMatta's framework is important for the understanding of how the myth of Brazil as a racial democracy has survived, and also led many scientists into seeing class as the overall marker of social differentiation (Wade 1997). The myth about the three races melting into a colour-blind and racial democracy is fundamental in the Brazilian national ideology. According to DaMatta (1995) (and many with him) this was a cultural creation that had little to do with the reality of Brazilian race relations. In the article "For an Anthropology of the Brazilian tradition or "A Virtude está no Meio"" (the virtue lies in between) DaMatta (1995) critiques non-Brazilian scientists who insist on seeing Brazil, as well as the rest of Latin America, as a logical catastrophe where everything is a matter out of place. The understanding of Brazil as a society that lacks logic, he contributes to scientists who are taking their own (western) understanding of logic for granted. In applying a few of their concepts derived from the logic of *their* societies they fail to understand that the logic (or virtue) of Brazil lies in between (DaMatta 1995). DaMatta (1995) argues that in Brazil there is no contradiction in mixing oranges and apples, rather what characterises Brazil is encompassment and mediation between contradictions. To understand the logic of Brazil he urges scientists to look at the relational level. He defines what he calls a relational logic as: "together and differentiated in a complementary fashion" as opposed to the individualistic socio-logic (found in North America) where it is "equal but different". So, if the social logic of Brazil is a relational logic, then mediation between apparently contradicting traditions becomes essential to the understanding of this country. The task becomes what kind of relations that make contradictions complement each other. In relation to race relations, one of the national symbols of Brazil is the mestiço as opposed to the black and white polarization in the United States. The mestiço lies in between and is a mediating symbol of race relation on a national and ideological level. The mestiço is not just a result of actual miscegenation, but also a symbol for the encompassment of oppositions. The mediation between, and encompassment of, apparent contradictions is seen in political life, in religion (syncretism), and in race relations. These meetings are what make Brazil Brazil (DaMatta 1995). Using this framework to understand the Brazilian logic I argue that my afro-

Brazilian informants constantly mediate between the hegemonic discourse of racial democracy and the reality of everyday racism.

Class

The classical and ongoing debate on whether it is class or race that should be considered the most significant marker of differentiation dominates the theoretical and analytical approaches to Brazil. In this central debate on race and class the main issue is whether race can or can not be explained or determined in terms of class (Wade 1997). Several Marxist approaches explain the superior position of class over race as a marker of differentiation (Goldstein 2003). The classical Marxist approach argues that the opposition between the bourgeois and the proletariat determine all levels in the capitalist society. According to this point of view racial categories are then created by the ruling class as a mechanism of oppression to better control a certain group of the working class. Racism becomes a creation of colonial class relations, while class becomes the dominating factor for all aspects in the society (Wade 1997).

By "inventing" racial identities, or racism, the focus of the proletariat will be diverted from class struggle, and only through altering class relation can there be a change in racism (Wade 2002). It makes the working class rally around racial identities instead of opening their eyes to class consciousness.

There is no doubt that class is an important factor of differentiating in many societies, including Brazil, but as Wade (1997) points out there are various circumstances that can not be explained by class itself. There is evidence that racial categories can have an effect on economic factors, not only the other way around. He exemplifies this by pointing to the fact that certain ideas about differences between Africans and Indians led the plantation owner to prefer African slaves because the Indians were seen as weaker. Further, Wade (1997) argues that change in class structure not always explain changes in racial identification, as an example he draws attention to the desegregation in the US. This must be seen in relation to the fall of scientific racism as well as black resistance/militancy, not only as a capitalistic need for change in the work force. Racism, according to the Marxist approach, becomes an invention or a "false consciousness", and this kind of approach does not account for the heterogeneity within the racial category; i.e. that people from the same racial category are found in different classes. More recent approaches are moving away from seeing class as the factor who totally determines all aspects of society and towards a position were race and class

are interconnected and influence each other. The emphasis is directed towards the various ways that people perceive sameness and difference, and in which manners they struggle, resist and mobilise. This shows how different groups have different interests, and how ideas about race and racial identities can influence economic structure (Wade 2002). In sum, more recent approaches that hold class as the principle factor of differentiation does not reject the influence of ideas about race and racial identities in politics and economy.

I argue that racial discrimination and institutionalized racism should not be overlooked when analyzing production and reproduction of social inequality in the Brazilian society. By not taking into consideration the way that racism and racial discrimination works in Brazil, one will loose vital insights as to why the majority of the poor people are blacks and what mechanisms that are working to keep them in their position as a marginalized group. I do recognize that class is an important factor of differentiation in Brazil. However, my focus in this dissertation is on race and race relations and I argue that *raça* (race) is a relevant category in social classification in Salvador.

Race

The paradigm of scientific racism, where it was believed that people could be divided into biologically different races, is long gone in anthropological approaches to the study of race. From the early 20th century Franz Boas was among those who opposed the idea of dividing humans into different races with different capabilities in relation to moral and intellect. His theories of historic particularism (i.e. every society has its own particular history that can not be placed into an evolutionary hierarchy), had great influence on anthropological view on race. Different societies and cultures had their own logic, and should be analysed within the particular history. Boas had great influence on Gilberto Freyre, the man that has been crowned as the founding father of race relations in Brazil (DaMatta 1995). Today the dominating approach holds that human travel and sexual interaction has made it impossible to identify any biologically different types of human beings (Wade 2002). Further, race is seen as purely a social construction used to differentiate people with different human characteristics. Ideologies of nationalism as an important field for the development of ideas about race became a focal point in the mid 1980s. Dominating national ideologies "exclude, marginalise and devalue the status and input of some racially identified minorities" (Wade 2002:19-20), like in the case of Latin America where it is based on mixedness. The dominating nationalism can then be used to discriminate and exclude groups which are seen

as racially or ethnically different, or simply as "others" in relation to the nation. However, as in the case of the Brazilian nation, racialised "others" can be included in the definition of the nation when specific cultural elements are seen as a contributively (Wade 2002).

Identity politics: race and ethnicity

Today's dominating theoretical perspective on identity is that it is relational and constructed (Comaroff 1996). Identity, whether it is racial, ethnic or any other form of identity, is constructed in relation to what it is *not*. The construction of an identity is a product of human interaction and a process of differentiation (Comaroff 1996). An identity has to stand in contrast to something else, there has to be a significant *other*. Identity is created where groups meet and it is the relation between the groups which is fundamental for the creation and construction of identity (Barth 1969). The contemporary view on identity has abandoned the essentialistic approach where identity is seen as something static and unchangeable. The modern view is that identity is multiple, flexible and complex. A person does not have one identity, but several (Comaroff 1996). Which aspects that are played out in a meeting between individuals or groups depend on the context and the relation between the parties. In other words, the identity has to be socially relevant in order to be significant.

In my approach to the study of racial or ethnic identities I build upon the analytical framework of Peter Wade. He argues that distinguishing between racial and ethnic identities is important, at least for analytical purposes. Nations and ethnic groups are both imagined communities (Anderson 1991) and as such they too, like race, are social constructions. There is, however, an analytical distinction between them, even though nations are ethnic groups and ethnic groups can become nations (Eriksen 1998). People perceive them as different categories. In my opinion this can also be said about ethnic and racial identities. Like nations and ethnic groups, race and racial identities are constructed to create difference and sameness. Both the concept of race and that of ethnicity is a product of a particular historical context and as such they should be treated differently (Wade 1997). In Latin America, as elsewhere in the world, racial and ethnic identities have become increasingly significant during the last decades. The significance of such identities is not constrained to minorities or non-governmental organisations, but is also increasingly important for governments and majorities. Claims for social justice and political rights, as well as cultural autonomy, historical recognition and land reforms, are being made in the name of racial and/or ethnic differences (Wade 1997).

The distinction between the term race and the term ethnicity is blurry. They are both socially constructed categories that are created and recreated through social encounters and interactions in everyday life. Both categories are concerned with classification of people and relationships between groups. Many social scientists avoid using race as an analytical category for analytical purposes; however, I believe it to be a fruitful one. In many ways they do intercept, but in my opinion (and in line with Wade 1997) as the two terms are a product of different histories and contexts there is a point to keeping the distinction. Today's paradigm is that races are social constructions. The idea of race is just an idea. "The notion that races exist with definable physical characteristics and, even more so, that some races are superior to others is the result of particular historical processes which, many would argue, have their roots in the colonisation by European people of other areas of the world" (Wade 1997:13-14).

Wade (1997) argues that not to attribute any significance to racial identities, or to the discrimination which is based upon racial identities, is to stove away the particular history in which they have come to be as powerful as they are. To highlight the history of race does not imply that racism or racial identities is the same everywhere, or that different forms of racism are not equally serious. The different forms of racism are just linked in different ways to the European colonial history(Wade 1997). Even though the practices are different and the meanings assigned to black or white are different in different ex-colonies they are interrelated and dependent on the European colonial history. Although he argues for a distinction between the ethnicity and race, Wade (1997) do recognise that in more than one way they do overlap both analytically and in practice. Discourses about origin and "transmission of essence" from generation to generation are present in both categories. In the case of racial identifications the phenotypical markers are perceived as being handed down through blood. While in the case of ethnicity, according to Wade (1997), the origin of a culture is "absorbed" by a person. For example Blacks are present in various locations in Brazil, but ethnic identification might be present within the racial category (and vice versa). This means that any individual or group can have both racial and ethnic identities.

Race (or gender, ethnicity and class), is a social construction, but this does not mean that people do not perceive it to be a real category. What is more is that in many societies it is also a powerful social category. Here in lies my reason and argument to look at race in Brazil. After all, the national ideology is based on a myth of racial democracy, not on multi-ethnicity (Ribeiro 2000). I have chosen to use the term race as an analytical category because I consider Brazil, or more accurately my field site, a society where race is an important social category.

Raça was part and parcel of daily discourse, not only among my focus group but also in the media and among other informants and acquaintances with different skin colour and class background. Among my informants words like *raça negra* (the negro race) or *raça pura* (pure race) were commonly used to describe differences between groups of people within the nation and also between Brazil and other nations. Only when I kept on pushing the informants from the higher social classes with a very high educational level, or that had spent some significant time abroad, to explain the meaning of race did I occasionally hear ethnicity being mentioned. Ethnicity was not a part of everyday discourse and certainly not a part of differentiation between people or groups of people. The fact that *movimento negro* (the black Brazilian movement) has chosen to construct a black identity around *negro* instead of Afro-Brazilian further indicates the importance of race as a social construction in Salvador. My informants self identified with this *negro* identity and one of the markers of difference for this identity was phenotypical.

Many argue that race is a social category based on phenotype which means that difference in physical appearance is the basis of racial classification. In other words people use differences in appearance to include or exclude into social categories that are believed to be natural hereditary differences. This approach is the most widely applied for analysing race today (Wade 1997). Like Wade (1997), I argue that the significant markers of physical difference that are used to determine/identify the socially constructed racial distinction are specific. The racial signifiers are specific combinations of skin colour, hair type or texture, facial features like nose, lips, and eyes.

Black identities in Salvador

In his book "Blackness without Ethnicity" Sansone (2003) provides a great framework and context for studying Afro-Brazilian culture in Salvador. His aim is to contribute to an international understanding of constructions of ethnicity and race in Brazil, as well as the rest of Latin America. He argues that discourses on race and ethnicity from North America is not adequate for studying the same phenomena in countries where the idea of race is not constructed on a clear cut division between black and white. In exploring the different ways that race and ethnicity is constructed he focuses on black identities in Brazil, and in particular Salvador. In this dissertation I make use of some of Sansone's definitions of Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Bahian culture as analytical tools and I also use his findings in comparison to my own. In my discussion of *implicit* black and *explicit* black spaces I build upon Sansone's

understanding of the analytical distinction between these spaces, before I depart from it by introducing what I call neutral space.

Racism in Brazil:

Considering the vast literature on racial discrimination little has been written on everyday discourses on race and racism among ordinary people in Brazil. Winndance Twine (1998) and Goldstein (2003) are among those who have done fieldwork focusing on racism in everyday life. Their findings however contradict one another on several levels. Winndance Twine (1998) found that among her Afro-Brazilian informants in south eastern Brazil there was an almost total denial of racism, while Goldstein (2003) found her Afro-Brazilian informants in a shantytown in Rio de Janeiro to be acutely aware of racism. In this dissertation I use both Goldstein (2003) and Winddane Twine (1998) for the purpose of comparison and to better understand the subtle ways that racism works in Brazil.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

MULTI-SITED AND URBAN FIELDWORK

This dissertation is based on fieldwork carried out in Salvador da Bahia between January and June 2005. The city is the state capital of Bahia, beautifully situated as it is overlooking the *Baia dos todos os santos* (the Bay of All Saints) on the north eastern coast of Brazil. With a population of approximately 2, 6 millions[2] it is the fourth largest city in Brazil (Sansone 2003). Brazil is the country outside of Africa with the largest black population (Skidmore 1999), and the city of Salvador has the country's highest concentration of afro-Brazilians in the population (Sansone 2003). The strong presence of afro-Brazilian music, -cuisine, -religion, -fashion and –*estilo de vida* (lifestyle) is what sets the city and the state apart from other regions in Brazil and has given it nicknames like "Black Rome" and "the Cradle of Afro-Brazilian culture". There are so many similarities between the region of Bahia and the Caribbean when it comes to religious systems and syncretism, music with a strong emphasis on percussion, and the contemporary system of race relations, that Bahia is sometimes referred to "the south edge of the Caribbean"(Sansone 2003:21). Salvador is also perceived as a stronghold for the black Brazilian movement, and this was one of the main reasons for my choice of field site. I wanted to see if young Afro-Brazilians in Salvador, because of the strong presence of the black movement, were more inclined to participate in mobilisation

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[2] Numbers are collected from IBGE; instituto brasileiro de geografia e estatisticas (Brazilian Bureau of statistics) (November 2006)

along racial lines than Afro-Brazilians elsewhere. My fieldwork consisted of different field sites within the context of the city of Salvador, but before I elaborate on this I will contextualize my own fieldwork within the history of urban anthropology.

Urban anthropology

Emerging in the 1960s and gaining ground in the 1970s and 1980s urban anthropology is a relatively young anthropological subdivision. In 1980, urban anthropology was a subdivision alongside other subdivisions like medical, psychological, cognitive, symbolic anthropology. but very narrow and theoretically of little influence (Sanjek 1990). Oscar Lewis and his work on urban poverty was a definite source of inspiration to the urban anthropology from the 1960s. The urban anthropological research of the 1950s to the 1970s was concerned with issues like rural-urban migration, exposure of urban poverty, ethnography on life in residential areas, neighbourhoods and an attraction towards ethnicity (Sanjek 1990).

The contemporary body of research on urban anthropology (see Low 1996) is a lot more diverse and not easily classified. In her article "The Anthropology of Cities: Imagining and Theorizing the City" Low (1996) maps out "a guide to the diverse ideas, concepts, and frameworks used to analyze and write about the city, (…) (Low 1996:45). Through metaphors and images she offers a way of dealing with the complexity and communication in urban anthropological studies. The categories she draws are of course no absolute categories, but rather images that have been used to analyse and write about fieldwork in urban settings. Keeping that in mind, I would describe my own dissertation as having an approach to the city both as contested and divided. Low (1996) writes that the metaphor *The contested city* encompasses research focused on urban struggles and different types of resistance (active or silent). My fieldwork somehow also crosses over to what Low (1996) labels *The divided city,* a metaphor that "evokes hidden barriers of race and class encoded in metaphors of uptown and downtown (…), of black and white"(Low 1996:46). Studies included in this category have focused on different aspects of racism and racial segregation. Even though my fieldwork is not about struggles over urban spaces, there are elements of active and silent forms of resistance to aspects of racism within different urban spaces. Hence, I see my approach to the city as both contested and divided.

My fieldwork was situated in the urban context of Salvador. By multi-cited fieldwork I mean a field that is not confined to one certain area or "a local field" (Hannerz 2003:19) as for example one neighbourhood, one institution or an area within a walking distance from a

defined core. One strategy to deal with the complexity and large-scale of an urban setting is to have a well defined group of informants and field universe (Frøystad 2003, Eriksen 1998). Anthropologists working in urban settings can never get a complete census of the city's inhabitants and many of the face-to-face relations may be momentary hence the need for conscious decisions about the selection of informants and size of field universe. Frøystad (2003) distinguishes between three types of criteria for such a selection: theme-oriented, network-oriented and geographically-oriented. Theme-oriented universe helps select informants who share certain qualities or characteristics such as students, single-mums or immigrants from Sweden. Network-oriented universe is a lot like the theme-oriented but the main criteria is that the informants are related to each other in one way or another. In field universe defined by geography the informants are selected from where they live or their whereabouts in certain localities. Using these criteria as a guideline for defining a field universe my focus became theme-oriented on young afro-Brazilians from the lower economical classes. My fieldwork was not defined geographically or confined to certain areas of the city of Salvador. Rather it was a multi-sited fieldwork where I followed my informants in different situations and contexts. One of the biggest challenges with a field consisting of a multiple of sites was how to tie the sites into meaningful connections. Most of my informants however were part of a social network of friends and acquaintances, but not all of them. And also besides being afro-Brazilians living in Salvador they all identified themselves as *negros*. A multi-sited fieldwork challenges the traditional participant observation as the main methodological tool, and in order to compensate for that I have also conducted formal interviews, listened to music, used direct observations and the mass media. In order to grasp the reasons for why my informants did not want to become activists in the black movement, I also sought out several institutions affiliated with the black movement. Public meetings and cultural events organized by the movement became other sites that I frequented in order to get a better understanding of the ideas and politics of the black movement.

Methods Applied

Access

Belmonte (1989) shows some of the difficulties regarding access one can encounter when doing fieldwork. Even with the help of an informant who introduced him and explained his anthropological intentions he was not successful in entering the neighbourhood of "Fontana del Re". Not until he, by coincidence, met the right person did he get the access he needed. I

met my first key informant, Oxumaré, by coincidence. He worked part time at an agency that hired out apartments, and he got the task of finding me a suitable place to live. We spent a couple of days looking at different apartments in different neighbourhoods before I finally decided upon a 2 bedroom flat in a seven-storeys building. By that time we had already gotten to know each other well enough for him to ask if I wanted to meet up with him and some of his friends after his working hours. I accepted the offer, and from there on I was slowly introduced to his vast network of friends. My second key informant, Iansã, I met at the beach. She and a friend had put up a small tent were they were giving massages to people who wanted to escape the burning sun for between 10 minutes to 1 hour. During my 15 minutes neck- and shoulder massage I and Iansã found ourselves discussing the situation for black people in Brazil. From there on I met up with Iansã almost every day, and went with her to work, to concerts, to religious meetings or to her house were we relaxed in the hammock.

Iansã and Oxumaré and people in their networks are all in their 20s and 30s from the lower economical classes, and they live in different neighbourhoods in Salvador. Some of these people can not be considered Afro-Brazilians, but approximately 80 % of them are black. Those who were blacks considered themselves to be *negros*[3]. This group of people constitute my main focus group for this dissertation. Gaining access to Iansã and Piloho's network of friend did not offer many obstacles, but as I said I also wanted to gain access to the black movement. This, however, turned out to be extremely difficult and here I can certainly relate to Belmonte (1989) and his description of the deeply rooted mistrust that people held towards him and the feeling of constantly being in an object of "interview".

Movimento Negro (the Black Movement)

The Brazilian black movement consists of various organizations and affiliations, and they do not have a political or administrative core. As Hanchard (1994) points out the black movement consists of several movements with "distinct ideological commitment and political strategies" (Hanchard 1994: 99). The different groups that consider themselves part of the black movement are in other words lacking coherent political goals, strategies and direction. Although it is correct that all of the different groups are diverse both in their expressions and strategies, I argue that Hanchard (1994) fails to see the strength in this situation. He focuses on the lack of political coherence resulting in little political power and effectiveness. In my opinion, the diverse expressions might actually be of importance at another level, the one

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[3] *negro*-identity, and the distinction between black and negro will be dealt with in chapter 3.

thing all the affiliated groups share is the wish to draw attention to the *Negro*'s situation and history of submission in Brazil, the fight against racism and for social justice. The great variety of organizations helps bringing the consciousness rising to a greater part of the society. My informants participate in cultural events and seek different arenas where they can express their blackness. On the level of expressing blackness through culture and fashion events organized by the black movement was important for my informants, and the various groups affiliated with the movement offered a variety of arenas they could seek to. Like Hanchard (1994) I agree that the lack of coherency between the various groups of the black movement might weaken their political power. On the other hand, one could say that their power lies in their diversity that help bring the message of consciousness and black pride to different groups of people. Many of my self-declared negro informants identify with the message of black pride when conveyed through culture, but still they are reluctant to become activists or join the more established and political parts of *movimento negro* (the black movement).

In my approach to *movimento negro* I started out by frequenting cultural events organised by the movement whenever my informants decided to go. In this way I learned a lot from observations and also by listening to the lyrics of music played at such events. I knew that it was not going to be an easy task to conduct fieldwork within the *Movimento Negro* as parts of the movement are highly suspicious to all whites. Access to one of the movement's associations at a daily basis was denied mostly on the basis of my skin colour. In the beginning of the fieldwork I was quite naïve when I started to call the different associations of the black movement. Usually the person on the receiving end of the telephone would start a cross examination of me regarding the purpose of my fieldwork. At the end of the conversation I was sometimes asked to describe my skin colour, and when I answered "white" my request for an interview was always declined. It slowly dawned on me that maybe all the rejections I met when seeking information about meetings and trying to organise interviews with the movement had more to do with skin colour than I had thought. And that in a supposedly (skin) colour blind society! In several "Public meetings" that I attended, (organised by groups within the black movement), I felt the sceptic eyes all over me. If I tried to talk to people afterwards they would try to ignore me as best they could; turning their shoulder against me, pretend not to hear me or stare at something behind me. It was only after some of my well connected informants would vouch for me that I succeeded in getting interviews. I still was not able to frequent any of the associations on a daily basis, but at least I

was able to get some interviews. However, during some of the interviews the person interviewed let me know that this was an exception. Others kept taking phone calls or interrupting the interview, and one highly accepted and educated representative told me that "only once in a while people who are not *negro* can contribute to the cause".

Data gathered

This dissertation is based on material gathered from a variety of sources and field sites. By following my black and self-identified *negro*-informants in different contexts I was able to conduct both participant and non-participant observation. These gave me an opportunity to observe their social interaction with people in arenas where blackness was important and in other arenas were it was of no significance. These observations also resulted in numerous descriptions of different settings like street life, concerts, cultural events, homes etc. as well as people's appearance, clothing and conduct in different situations. I sometimes used a tape recorder to document my conversation with my informants or their conversations with other people, and I always scribbled it down in my little pocket-sized notebook. I did not feel the need to conduct formal interviews with these informants, because most of the time I got a lot of information from conversations that naturally generated questions and answers that was of my interest. However, I always had to push the conversation if I wanted to get some examples of experienced racism. In my experience, like that of Sheriff (2001), weeks could go by without any mentioning of racism. Since I was interested in their views and personal experience with racism and discrimination I raised questions concerning the issue in more intimate conversations. After I had mentioned it several times and as my relationship with my informants became more personal they opened up little by little.

I have already described the difficulties I encountered when I tried to gain access to the groups affiliated with the black movement. These difficulties are reflected in the kind of data I was able to obtain. A large portion of my data on the black movement comes from non-participant observation at public meeting. These arenas gave me an insight into which issues that was considered important to the movement, and also into their political strategies. Through my description of how people dressed and their hair dues I also got an idea of which markers they perceived as essential in their construction of blackness. To find out where and when these meetings were held I had to spend a considerably amount of time looking for clues on web pages and in the local newspapers. Since the black movement does not have an administrative core the information about meetings are usually distributed via emails. On

every meeting I went to there was a list were you could write your name, occupation and email. Yet, I never received any emails about upcoming meetings and debates.

I conducted 4 structured and semi-structured interviews with spokespersons for the different entities of *Movimento Negro*. The interviews were conducted at the informant's workplace and lasted between 30 min.- 2 hours. My questions centred on the political goals and strategy of the movement as well as their views on racism and discrimination of blacks in Brazil. Even though, as I explained above, I managed to get some interviews I was always reminded that my presence was not highly thought of. Some of the representatives I interviewed would do everything in their power to make me feel as little and insignificant as possible. On several occasions I spent hours on a bus just to reach the destination of a sheduled interview and then they would let me wait for hours at the location until they declined or rescheduled the interview (this, however, made me become more aware of subtle forms of exclusion). Before we could start the interviews I had to explain in great detail about my project and my personal beliefs regarding racism and discrimination of blacks in Brazil. The interviews were often interrupted by other people or if the informant decided that he or she would make and answer phone calls at the same time as we conducted the interview. With some of the people I interviewed I was able to gain a small level of trust after I had assured them that I agreed with their views on the black population as a marginalised and discriminated group in the Brazilian society. This meant that I could not have a completely objective position in these interviews and I felt that some of the people interviewed tried to lead me in the direction most suitable for them. In a way it was an exercise of power were I was constantly reminded of my insignificance in relation to the movement.

Just how important trust is can be seen in the case of Winddance Twine (1998). She argues that her informants do not recognize racism. In other words, Winddance Twine sees racism where her informants do not. That her informants do not identify racism might be true to a certain extent, and it sure appears to be the case among the Afro-Brazilians interviewed by Winddance Twine (1998). However, I do question whether in her case there could be more at work. There are situations and environments in Brazil where talking about racism is strictly taboo. I imagine that a small scale community where Afro-Brazilians are a minority like the one where she conducted her fieldwork would be such a place. She herself talks about the particular difficulties she had with gaining access and trust by being an Afro-American woman (and antiracist activist). Several of her informants were suspicious of her being an undercover agent for the government and that she spoke Portuguese with an American accent

was thought to be a diversion. I do not know anything about her Portuguese skills, but my own research revealed that the nuances in the language often played an important role when my informants were talking about racism. In contrast to her field site, in Salvador most people have little problem with pointing out arenas where people are treated differently according to their skin colour. But to get people to talk about themselves and their own experiences is another story. Only my key informants would open up, little by little and after spending enough time with me to be absolutely sure about my intentions. If her informants did not trust her it could be a great risk for them if she turned out to have other intentions than the ones she uttered. The Brazilian society is a society where many things depend on your network, and if speaking openly about racism might burn off some bridges (say loosing your job) it is better left unsaid.

By comparing my problems of access to that of Winddance Twine (1998) I have tried to show the effects that a lack of trust can have on the obtained data. But before I move on to the last section of this chapter I want to say that not all activists and people involved in the black movement are sceptical of white people. Like any other group of people they are heterogeneous. Two weeks before the end of my fieldwork I was introduced to Iroko, another representative from the black movement. Our mutual interest in music broke some of the barriers I had with other activists, and in spite of the short amount I knew him he turned out to be a very valuable source regarding the black movement.

Anonymity and informants

To ensure the anonymity of my informants I have chosen to change their names. Even though some of my informants gave me information as spokesmen and representatives of *Movimento Negro* I choose not to reveal their identity. To achieve full anonymity some of the characters from the movement have been constructed. I do this to protect some of the informants who shared sensitive personal information to demonstrate and to give a picture of the nature of racism and discrimination in Salvador. This information was in most cases given under the condition that I kept the source anonymous. Inspired by the afro-Brazilian culture and religion I have given two two of my informants pseudonyms from the mythical world of the *Candomblé*-religion. I have given them the name of the *orixá* (Yoruba word that describe a god in the *candomblé*-religion) that best describe their personality[4].

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[4] See "Gudernes rum" (Sjøslev) for detailed descriptions of candomblé and the system of gods.

Iansã is a single mum for her eleven-year old boy and her three-year old daughter. They live with their dad a block away from Iansã's one-bedroom apartment but sleeps over once or twice a week. She is in her late twenties, has a private school back ground and sees herself as an independent woman. Her skin colour is black and she is extremely proud to be a *negona* (literally meaning big black female). Her religion is *Candomblé ,* she is a *capoeirista* (Angola-style) and she makes her living as a freelance professional masseuse. To earn a little extra she sells her home-made jewels and recites poems on the bus. Even though several people in her family are well off, she takes pride in her independency and struggles every day to make ends meet. I spent a lot of time at the beach with Iansã as part of her weekly routine as a masseuse takes place there. After approximately a month of our first encounter she started to invite me to several cultural events and slowly I got introduced to her vast network of friends. The majority of the people who constitute her network I will describe as young blacks that represent what Sansone (2003) calls the modern black culture in Brazil. Most of them have afro-hair, African inspired and colourful clothes, and aesthetic African-look.

Oxumaré is a freelance *capeteiro* (bartender) in his early thirties. He also works renting out apartments outside of *época das festas* (Salvador is known for its long season of festivities which lasts from early December to the end of March). He has a laid back attitude towards life and proudly states that he leads the life of a *negão* (conscious and black). He has a passion for reggae, afro-reggae and *axé*-music and he is the undisputed King of *dar um jeitinho* (way of "bending the rules" in favour of oneself). He is a former *capoeirista* (Angola-style) and like all "conscious" *negões* he faithfully goes to hear "Geronimo" play on Tuesdays. Like Iansã he too was raised by his aunt and has a strained relationship with his biological mum. He has two children with two different women, but the contact with his children is almost non-existent. He lives at home with his extended family in a low class neighbourhood. Oxumaré has never graduated from university although he spent several years as an assisting teacher at the faculty of *educação física* (physical training). Early on he took a keen interest in my project and because of his vast network of acquaintances he was able to facilitate several interviews and contacts for me. He also introduced me to his network of friends that certainly has given me a lot of valuable information about the lives of young low- and middle class people in Salvador.

2. CONTEXT

Race relations in Post-abolition Brazil

When analysing race relations in Brazil it is common to identify or to operate with three periods of race relations in modern times or post-slavery (Sansone 2003, Graham 1999, Hanchard 1994). In this chapter I will present the three periods of race relations and account for former and contemporary debates on race relations in Brazil. The first period spans from the abolition of slavery in 1888 to the 1930s, the second period spans from the beginning of the 1930s to the late 1970s, and the last period starts in the late 1970s up until today (Sansone 2003). These periods also correspond to changes and stages of economic development and the levels of integration of Brazil's black population into the labour market. When studying racism and race relations in Brazil it is inevitable at some point to deal with the myth of racial democracy. After all it was adopted by the Brazilian government as the official national ideology during the second period of race relation. Gilberto Freyre is considered to be the founding father of the myth of racial democracy. In his most famous work "Casa Grande e Senzala" (The Masters and Slaves), first published in 1933 he portrays the process that brought about a cultural fusion of the three races as a rather harmonious one based on cultural reciprocity. Since the 1970s the literature and the debate on race relations in Brazil has been dominated by criticism of Freyre and the myth of racial democracy.

The first period of race relations: 1888-1930s

The first period begins with the abolition of slavery in May 1888 and lasts until the 1930s. Unlike the United States (which is often used in comparisons), Brazil never experienced any racial segregation after the abolition of slavery. However the society continued to be highly hierarchical with regards to both class and colour with an almost all white elite at the top of the hierarchy controlling all the resources (Sansone 2003). During slavery the existence of overt and systematic racist ideas were not expressed to the same degree as after abolition when "scientific racism" became the dominant paradigm (Graham 1999). The prime advocate for scientific racism was Herbert Spencer. He had an immense influence in Brazil (Graham 1999: 48) with his theories of social Darwinism. According to Spencer, societies developed in same ways as all other living organisms. By this he meant that through a natural selection only the fittest people as well as societies would survive. Scientific racism was based on an idea that there exists biologically different human races and that there are different levels of superiority between the races in regards to moral judgement and intelligence (Eriksen 1998).

Spencer argued that since different races possessed different capabilities it was only natural that some races were better fit to rule over others. In this hierarchy the white Anglo Saxons and their "civilized" societies where place on the very top while the "primitive" African were found at the bottom (Spencer 1891 in Graham 1999).

During slavery there had also been an extensive miscegenation and no clear cut division between the "three races": the Portuguese, the Indians and the Africans. In the context of scientific racism the task for Brazilian nation building became how to deal with Brazil's mulatto population since according to the European theories racial mixing would lead to a degeneration of the race (Graham 1999). In the Brazilian literature, debates and political life at the time the emphasis was on the distinct cultural contributions the three races, Africans, Portuguese an Indians, gave to the Brazilian mixture. The idea was that race was not something immutable, but could be manipulated and improved. Brazilian thinkers like Oliveira Vianna (1949 in Graham 1999) and Nina Rodrigues (1920 in Graham 1999) represented a view were the miscegenation of racial groups that characterized the Brazilian people was seen as highly problematic as this would lead to an inferior Brazilian race (Barcellos Rezende 2004). Rodrigues (1920 in Graham 1999) saw the mulatto as inferior to even the Indians and Africans as it was not a pure race. He also argued that criminality was a feature of the black population (Graham 1999). Vianna (1949 in Graham 1999) on the other hand represented a view where "whitening" could be produced by racial mixture but the effects of the inferior elements in the mulatto individual was unknown and doubtful. The process of whitening through mainly miscegenation would lead to an improvement both in the physical and moral character of the Brazilian people (Barcellos Rezende 2004). However there was a disagreement in the debate on whether miscegenation would benefit the Brazilian people if it occurred between all of the "three races". The ideology of whitening the Brazilian people through racial mixing became part of the states policy through the subsidisation of European immigrants.

This first period of race relations was shaped by waves of European immigrants that was subsidised by the state to replace the ex-slaves as labourers because they demanded too much in return for their labour (Graham 1999). The state paid for the immigrants' passages and they sustained them and their families by giving them household and food upon arrival in Brazil (Graham 1999). The government further provided the immigrants with assistance in their search for employment. The little industrial employment that existed was confined to the south and south-east of Brazil (Sansone 2003), and this is where the immigrants arrived

(Graham 1999). The ex-slaves on the other hand was not given any compensation for the centuries they spent in the *senzalas* (slave quarters), and passed on from being slaves to make up the vast majority of the lower class. Since the European immigrants occupied industrial positions both in the cities and in rural areas there were not many possibilities for black people to find work that could generate social mobility (Sansone 2003).

In this context Gilberto Freyre attempted to rethink the *Brasilidade* (Brazilianess). He shifted the focus of racial studies away from biological determinism. Instead he emphasised on culture. This perspective had been gaining ground for some decades, but Freyre was the one to synthesise the ideas and theories in to what has become the present day national ideology; the racial democracy. Freyre portrays the Portuguese as "specifically bi-continental and more malleable" and the Negros as having more "evolved origins as compared with the Brazilian Indians" (Barcellos Rezende 2004: 758). In this sense Freyre still held the evolutionist perspective on races and culture, but he put them in a hierarchy where the opposites complemented each other in a harmonious way. He was concerned with the stigmata of miscegenation and the dominating perspective that held this to be a degenerating factor for the Brazilian people. For him the miscegenation that took place in the *Casa Grande* (Big House i.e. plantation house) and *Senzala* (slave quarter) became the core of the whole Brazilian cultural construction (Freyre 1964). For Freyre, Brazil was not first and foremost a melting pot of biologically different races, rather his perspective was that of a people of interweaving cultures. As for the gender roles the white male superiority was still the dominating perspective as the Portuguese men and their descendents where the ones that mixed with black and Indian women (Barcellos Rezende 2004). To summarize the basic ideas of the Brazilian society and people as described by Freyre the key concepts are cultural fusion and miscegenation with religion as a unifying element. His aim is to de-stigmatize the notion that miscegenation leads to a degeneration of races. The difference in appearance between Europeans and Brazilians he contributes to diet. Although his theories are based on certain elements of hierarchy he does not portray either of the African, Indian or Portuguese influences as superior on all levels to the other. They all have their flaws but it is the positive elements that have been absorbed into the Brazilian culture (Freyre 1964). At the same time he does not leave it to imagination that he believes that the three races possesses different levels of mental capacity.

Second period of race relations: 1930s-1970s

The populist regime or dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas in the year 1930 inaugurated the second period of race relations in modern Brazil (Graham 1999). The nation- state building and modernization projects of the Vargas regime favoured national labour forces and a new law was passed that demanded the labour force in industrial establishment to be made up of at least two-thirds Brazilians. As a consequence the immigration was limited and the labour market opened up opportunities to the black population (Sansone 2003). By the 1940s blacks and mulattos were fully incorporated into the working classes, but the middle class and the elite were still almost all white (Graham 1999). In 1937 Vargas banned all political parties and political organisations and declared a corporatist state (Graham 1999). Succeeding the Vargas dictatorship was a period of democratization before the military coup in 1964. Like the Vargas regime the military regime also considered protests against racial discrimination as a threat to the regime and the founding national principle of racial democracy (Graham 1999). The national discourses incorporated the myth of the melting together of the "three races" (the Indians, the Africans and the Portuguese) into a new, Brazilian "race" and made it a part of the liturgy of the state and official cultural policies (DaMatta 1981 in Sansone 2003). This unique and colour-blind "race" had been a recurring theme for decades in Brazilian art and poetry. In the late seventies and early eighties black organisations started to form as the living conditions for the black workers improved. This meant a chance for social mobility to a greater proportion of the black Brazilian population. In the last decade of their regime there was a growing interest on the behalf of the black workers in black pride and black culture when the military junta became less rigid. They had more money and leisure time and as they ascended socially they met different colour barriers that had not been seen previously (Sansone 2003).

Carnival associations, like Ilê Aiye (1964), were founded and there was a creation of new black movements. They attempted to organise on a national basis and claimed recognition for black cultural expressions. This was especially the case in Bahia (where black culture was made part of the public image) and was labelled by the media as the

"re-Africanization" of Bahia (Sansone 2003). Until the 1930s Brazil had look across the Atlantic for references to their national identity, but now the race issue was rephrased in cultural terms as Brazil, lead by intellectuals and artists, were rethinking their national identity (Barcellos Rezende 2004).

Third period of race relations: 1980s-today

The third period starts with the re-democratization and the fall of military dictatorship in 1985 (Sansone 2003) and continues until today. The labour market and industrial jobs that once opened up possibilities for social mobility to the black population do not have the same significance or status anymore. In addition there has emerged subtler and more evasive ways of discrimination in some parts of the labour market (new forms of segregation, according to Sansone). Often exemplified by clerks at shopping malls that have to have "good manners" or "boa aparencia" (good appearance) and that is translated into looking and behaving as whites (not showing signs of African cultural heritage like braided afro hair, visual candomblé items or anything else associated with "negritude"(blackness) or "identidade negra" (Black identity). The opening up of the country's borders and markets has also played an important role in the shaping of racial relation and racial terminology (Sansone 2003). During the various dictatorships which valued import-substitutes policies there were few imported goods in circulation and the very few items were only accessible to the elite and the ruling classes. The access to the rest of the world, through mass media and trade, means an abundance of new ideas and knowledge about cultures, life styles, ideas, social and human rights and so on.

There has also been an emerging acceptance and interest by the state in cultural expressions associated with blackness and African heritage and this had now come to be promoted as a part of Brazil's official culture. Images portrayed in official discourses on *Brasilidade* (Brazilianness) and *Baianidade* (Bahianness) (especially in tourism pamphlets) are often closely linked to the black culture and the black body (Sansone 2003). As the political repression was declining in the late 70s and early 80s studies and research on racial issues flourished again. The black movement re-emerged and was greatly influenced by the American civil rights movement in their quest for exposing Brazil's immense racial inequalities. Several quantitative studies were launched that showed the black populations disadvantages in labour and education due to racial discrimination. Class was still seen as an important principle of differentiation, but no longer seen as the sole reason for the major social inequality that existed, and still exists, in Brazil (Barcellos Rezende 2004). Much of the

resent recent scholarship on race relation builds on these studies of the 70s and 80s where race becomes a principle of exclusion that determines black people's marginal position in society (Ferreira 2004). The main goal in these studies is to denounce the myth of racial democracy.

Critic of the myth of racial democracy and contemporary deabtes

As a national discourse the myth of racial democracy establishes gender relations, naturalizes social hierarchies and dismisses racial inequality. During the last decades the work of Gilberto Freyre and the myth of racial democracy has been severely scrutinised and heavily criticized by scholars on racial relations in Brazil. The myth has been denounced time and time again by revealing grave occurrences of racial discrimination and violence against blacks. The myth of racial democracy has gradually been seen as the main instrument of racial subjugation in Brazil by scholars on race relation (Ferreira Da Silva 2004, Wade 2002). (Barcellos-Rezende (2004) says that Freyre's description of the colonizing people as unconcerned with racial purity and "blood streams" is rather far from reality. As for the Portuguese and their lack of prejudices and respect for other cultures (even African cultures) the same pictures of discrepancy emerges. Gender roles and lack of violence descriptions in sexual relations has also been a point of scrutiny and a series of studies have revealed and identified severe violence and perversion concerning the black womens' history in Brazil (Barcellos-Rezende 2004). They were subjugated not only to the harsh conditions of farm and domestic labour, but also their position as an object of sexual satisfaction and initiation, was a lot more brutal than described by Freyre. According to Barcellos-Rezende (2004) black women were in fact seen as responsible for the corruption and degeneration of the Brazilian moral and character through the sexual violence. The black women were the ones to lure the men and the young boys into the sexual promiscuity. In his account Freyre also gives a lot of attention to the bonding between nursing mammies and the children of the plantation, but he does not emphasise is that the wet nurses were separated from their own new born babies and rented out for profitable purposes(Barcellos-Rezende 2004).

There have been conducted numerous statistical and studies to show there is more at work than just differences in income levels as an explanatory factor to Brazil's enormous social equalities (See Hasenbalg and Silva 1988, Reichmann 1999, Ferreira Da Silva 2004). Scholars are dedicated to reveal discriminatory mechanisms and institutionalized racism in the educational- and justice system and in the labour market. Social mobility for blacks is met by a series of racial barriers (Goldstein2003, Sansone 2003). These studies reveal that class as a

principle of differentiation then, can not solemnly account for social inequality in Brazil. There is however no doubt that the Brazilian society is a highly stratified one where a small elite control most of the country's resources and wealth. The majority of the population belong to the lower classes while millions are believed to scrape by for less than a dollar a day.

Debate concerning the effectiveness of myths of origin.

There have been several anthropological studies on how myths of origin constitute parts of a society's ideology and that it can give grounds for systematic inequality (Eriksen 1998). The myths can legitimize and make social hierarchies and inequalities seem natural. It can also make it difficult for groups that wish to mobilize along social or racial lines. As Eriksen (1998) points out, myths of origin are often at the basis of creations of collective identities. History, he says, is the most important source of myths of origin. The significance of history does not lie in the question of whether it is true or not. What is interesting is how the myth is socially effective. The social effectiveness of the myth of racial democracy has been at the centre of the contemporary debates on race relation in Brazil. The myth of racial democracy and the "whitening" ideology help legitimize the social system and social inequality in Brazil. Lately these myths have been questioned, and the main argument being to see the myths as a hegemonic discourse that has enable the elite to argue that social inequalities are caused only by economical factors (Wade 2002). Social scientists like Hanchard (1994) and Winddance Twine (1998) represent a view were the myth of racial democracy is seen as a construction imposed from above to mask racism and render the population with a false consciousness with regards to racism and their own subjugated position in society. The lack of consciousness in turn becomes the answer to the key question in studies of race relations: why are there no overt racial conflicts in Brazil despite an ever growing research revealing the extent of racist practices? More recent research (Sheriff 2001, Goldstein 2003 and Sansone 2003) question this position and demonstrate that afro-Brazilians from the lower classes are not unconscious victims of the myth of racial democracy. Here, the myth exists more as a dream of equality (Sheriff 2001). Within the context of the racial democracy as an ideal (Goldstein 2003) and Sansone (2003) show that afro-Brazilians make use of personal strategies, (like manipulating their African characteristics or seek lighter skinned partners as fathers or mothers to their children), to reduce racial disadvantages. But in order to strategies like these they have to be aware of the stigma attached to blackness. This dissertation places itself within the last line of research presented above. I do acknowledge that the myth of racial democracy has been, and

still is a powerful ideological weapon that prevents public debates on racism. However, as my data indicates, young afro-Brazilians in Salvador are not unconscious victims that are unable to identify structures of racism and the stigma attached to blackness.

3. *NEGRO* IDENTITY

In this chapter I account for why my informants self-identify as *negros* and the meanings they attach to it. The term *negro* is not an official census term used in racial classification, but the term is constantly used by the black and brown population of Salvador. However, the term is not used to describe others nor (as I will show in this chapter) can it simply be translated with black. I argue that the *negro* identity is not ethnic, rather it is a black identity based on ideas of racial difference. To borrow Sansone's expression we are dealing with "blackness without ethnicity" (Sansone 2003). I will start by presenting an example where my key informant, Oxumaré, explains what it means to be a *negro*. This will hopefully give the reader a better idea of the difference between being *negro* and being *preto* (black). I further argue that my informants use the identity to overcome the stigma attached to blackness in Brazil. It is a way for them to deal with racism, prejudices and stereotypes. I will give an example in this chapter that illustrates how a self-identified *negra* deal with a situation she perceives as stigmatising. But even though this informant confronts what she sees as a person with prejudices towards blacks, I do not see the *negro* identity as a confrontational identity. Towards the end of this chapter I will look at the negro-identity within the wider context of Afro-Brazilian culture.

I am not Pardo *or* Preto. *I am* Negro*!*

"Eu sou *Negro*" (I am *Negro*), says Oxumaré. On his identification papers he is described as *pardo* (brown), but he can not identify himself as *pardo* because to him that does not really mean anything. He points to his arm and says that his skin might not be of the darkest kind, but never the less he is *negro*. He explains that in addition to being of African descent what makes him a *negro* is the life he leads, his style and his attitudes. He calls himself a *capeteiro*, someone who makes a living of selling drinks. He is a freelancer and looks at his profession as a form of art. When he is hired for an event or there is a concert or a festival going on he puts a lot of effort into buying the best fruit available from the local market and arranging it neatly in his small stall: colours that go together, watermelon cut in half with jagged edges, big banana leaves serving as bowls for small fruit. His stall is also equipped with electricity for the blender he uses to mix cocktails and to lighten the single light bulb hanging from the plastic ceiling. Sometimes he works alone and sometimes he works together with a long-time friend and fellow *Capeteiro*. Together they make cocktails and *caipiroskas,* drinks that derives from the national drink c*aipirinha,* but unlike the *caipirinha* that is made with lime it is up to the customer to choose the fruit in the *caipiroskas*. He sees himself as *negro* partly

because of his physical appearance that has all the "typical" characteristics or phenotypically markers that is usually related to being of African descent. Like the texture of his hair, the broad nose with large nostrils and his large lips. He tells me that when he sees himself in the mirror there is no doubt that he is *afrodescendente* (of African descent) and his ancestors were taken from Africa to slave for the Portuguese.

We are sitting on the sidewalk in a part of the old, historic town which is known to the locals as a notorious area for white, European women and men who come to find themselves a black man or a woman, and for black men and women trying to get a relationship to a foreign girl or a man and a ticket to a wealthy life outside of Brazil. As my informant explains there is more to being *negro* than physical appearance. He directs my attention to a young, black man walking from table to table trying to pick up foreign girls. The man my informant points at is about twenty years old, his hair is braided and down to the shoulders. He is wearing capoeira trousers, a singlet that shows off his strutting muscles and what looks like brand new and shiny Nike sneakers. His skin is very dark; he has a big, white smile and a huge watch at his wrist. "Ele é preto!"(He is black!), says Oxumaré. The two of them share the fact that they are of African descent, but to describe the other man Oxumaré uses the term *preto* that commonly is used to describe the colour black and not a person. This emphasises what he sees as this man's lack of consciousness about what it really means to be a *negro*. Even though this young man is (or a least gives the impression of being) a *capoeirista* (someone who practices capoeira) and through this takes part in the continuation of the African legacy, according to my informant this man does not lead a life that can be combined with being a true *negro*. "This man sleeps most of the day and the goal for the night, every night, is finding himself a European girlfriend", says my informant. He continues on to state that this man is part of a group of men that will seek relationships with white females only and as they bring the concept of *namorar* (relationships) to the women it is the women's obligation to *bancar* (derived from bank and means paying for everything) as they see it. Not only is this a form of prostitution, but the male prostitutes also act discriminating in the way they only go after white skinned people and they are in no way interested in Brazilian women. "Capoeira is such a beautiful thing with a lot of history and so important for our culture", says my informant as he clearly shows his disgust for the way these men use capoeira to impress women. He sees it as very bad PR for capoeira and the black population at large that this martial art form is misused by men that do not want to do anything with their lives and are just looking for an

easy way out. "Ele é mal educado e ignorante! Ele tem baixa astral!"(He has no manners and he is ignorant! He has bad vibes!).

What became clear to me from the above situation and through the course of my fieldwork was first of all that there is more to being *negro* than physical appearance. Having physical characteristics that is considered Afro-Brazilian like a certain hair texture or shape of the nose is only a part of being *negro.* Not even the degree of darkness in skin colour is the most important part. As Oxumaré explained being *negro* has to do with lifestyles and attitudes. It is about being in charge of your own life and being independent. He himself is a freelancer and his own boss. To underline his point of not being dependent on others or selling oneself he pointed to the young, black man trying to pick up white girls. In looking for a provider or an easy way out this man was willing to trade sex and maybe love. What is worse is that he abuses one of the strongest Afro-Brazilian cultural symbols, the *capoeira*, in his game of seduction. This, according to my informant, does not make him a *negro* but a *preto* (black) His attitudes and lifestyle makes him nothing else than a man with black skin colour who is dragging *negritude* (blackness) into the dirt. Oxumaré sees this man as a picture of what it is **not** to be a *negro*.

When comparing Oxumarés attempt to give me an understanding of what it means to be negro to what my other self-identified negro informants said about the matter what stood out was the importance of being independent. It was considered important to earn money in an honest way (i.e. not stealing or taking advantage of someone). Many of them had worked in formal sector earlier making money as schools assistants, store clerks or secretaries to name a few. Now 80% of these informants had jobs in the informal sector as masseuses, artists, painters, *capeteiros* and so on. Their reasons for making the move from formal to informal sector varied a bit, but the most common explication was that they wanted to be their own bosses. Some had also been treated in a way or told that if they wanted to continue their job they would have to tone down their *negritude* (blackness). As we will see in chapter 4 this could mean cutting your hair, or as some of my female informants reported they were asked to dress less African. No one chose to compromise their blackness. Instead they chose a lifestyle that might be more insecure since the income is not regular, but at least no one can tell them how to act or dress.

Comparing my informants to those of Goldstein (2003) indicates that being black in Salvador is not the same as being black in Rio de Janeiro. Goldstein states that:

Afro-Brazilians are wary of taking pride in and declaring their blackness. Blackness was – and still is – associated with slavery, dirty work, and ugliness. Only highly politicized people can speak openly about their race without feeling the shame attached to blackness (2003:106).

My informants on the other hand are not at all under-communicating their blackness. On the contrary, they try to incorporate as many of the symbols considered afro-Brazilians as possible into their lives and conduct. They take great pride in being *negro.* That does not mean that they are not aware that a stigma is attached to blackness and especially the term *negro*. The word *negro* can be perceived as highly stigmatizing in many situations and places even today. As one of my informants tried to explain to me that if he, being black and self-identified *negro*, would exchange harsh words with a white person the first thing the white man would shout out would be: you "negro"! In this way the word is perceived as an abusive word meant to reflect the black mans historic subordination to the white man, and also to point at the phenotypical markers of blacks as resembling that of a monkey. Like the statement of Goldstein (2003) that I showed above in this situation *negro* is associated with slavery. *Negro* is not something you can call a person, even if he or she is afro-Brazilian and have afro styled hair or other visible symbols that gives connotations to afro Brazilian culture. In my experience you first have to get to know a person and if they embrace this identity they will tell you within a short while that they are *negro/a*. To show beyond no doubt that this is how they see themselves they often refer to themselves as *negão* or *negona*, which literarily means big *negro/negra* and is used to emphasize the meaning of the word. Depending on how well you know a person, and more crucially how well the person knows you, a person may react as if offended if you refer to him or her as anything other than "negro"/"negão" or "negra"/"negona" after they have stated that this is how they see themselves. As I will show in chapter 4 my informants also identify racism and the stigma attached to blackness in various other arenas.

Instead of under-communicating their blackness in situations where they felt discriminated my infromants over-communicated their blackness or turned the situation in their favour. I found myself in one such incident one afternoon as Maria and I were feeling a little peckish and decided to stop and buy some *acarajé* (local fast-food). As we walked up to the stall a middle-aged and fair-skinned woman in front of us turned her head and looked at us. She looked from Maria to me and then back at Maria. She started eyeing her up and down with a rather unpleasant facial expression before she turned her back and took a step further away

from us. Maria gave me a glare that I interpreted as something like "did you see that"? Then she opened her mouth and in a loud and admonishing voice she began to talk about discrimination against blacks in Brazil. She was pretending to talk to me but at the end of her little speech she asked me "don't you think that people that discriminate and have prejudices against blacks are really ignorant?" She asked me this question she turned around and gave the woman a penetrating look before she turned to the woman who sold *acarajé* (she was also black) and asked her "what do you think?" The woman selling *acarajé* gave us a smile, but she did not answer the question. The white, middle aged woman on the other hand seemed very uncomfortable and as she hurried away she gave me an apologetic look. As we sat down to eat our food I asked Maria why she had reacted the way she did. She said that first of all she really felt that the woman's glare and body language clearly showed her discontent with black people. "She didn't look at you in that way. It was only me". Then she told me that she saw it as her task to confront people like that because nothing will change unless black people show them that they are proud of themselves. "The irony is that she was buying acarajé! Everybody knows that acarajé was food that the slaves ate!" Maria shook her head and rolled her eyes.

Ethnic or racial identity?

That there seems to be a stronger feeling of a common identity among Afro-Brazilians in Salvador than elsewhere in Brazil is commented upon by other researchers. Telles (1999) argues that this common identity is an ethnic identity. I, on the other hand argue that we are not dealing with an ethnic identity in this case, but a black identity without ethnicity (Sansone 2003). Telles (1999) argues that the *Blocos Afro* (afro carnival associations) in combination with a particular high level of residential segregation in Salvador compared to other areas might be the reason for the emergence of such an identity. In more or less isolated ghetto-like areas distinct cultural elements whether African or perceived as such are being reinforced and set in opposition to the white hegemony (Telles 1999). This distinctive ethnic identity is often attributed to the survival of tribal cultural elements from Africa, but Telles (1999) also puts this in the context of racial isolation of the Afro-Brazilian population. His studies show that in Rio de Janeiro which also has a large Afro-Brazilian population the residential segregation tends to increase with increase in income. While in Salvador the segregation is kept at the same level in all income classes (Telles 1999). This has also brought about a large Afro-Brazilian middle class unique to Salvador, "which provides service functions to ghetto residents and can take advantage of ethnic markets that provide opportunities for

entrepreneurship, including entrepreneurship in the culture industry (….)"(Telles 1999:94). These isolated Afro-Brazilian neighbourhoods favour a "construction of a separate identity that is reinforced through daily (endogamous) interaction (Telles 1999:94). Whether this identity can be attributed to a survival of cultural elements from Africa, a particular high level of racial segregation or through exchange between religious groups in Salvador and Africa is not my concern here. I am more interested in whether the *negro* identity should be seen as a racial or an ethnic identity.

In the introduction to this dissertation I argued for an analytical distinction between racial and ethnic identities. I will not repeat this argument here but only clarify what I mean by ethnicity. This is important in order to continue my argument against seeing the *negro* identity as an ethnic identity. The word ethnicity has often been used as a replacement for race to get away from the history of race and the bad connotations attached to it (Wade 1997). In popular discourse it is generally applied to minorities within the nation-state, and after the fall of scientific racism ethnic groups were used to describe groups of people believed to be biologically different. The distinction between race and ethnicity might not be very clear, but the former is used when dealing with phenotypical difference while the latter is concerned with "cultural" difference (Wade 1997). "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social organization of Cultural Difference" (1969) is a landmark within theories on ethnicity. In this book Barth (1969) and the other contributors broke with the essentialist view on ethnicity and showed that ethnicity is flexible, relational and a continuous process of negotiation. This approach to ethnicity is called constructivistic (Comaroff 1996). Again, we see from the subtitle of the book that ethnicity has to do with how cultural differences are organised. Like race (and class and gender) ethnicity is a social construction used to classify difference and sameness of people and groups of people. Since identity is constructed in the meeting with the other that are different which markers that are made relevant depend on the context and on the relation between the person or the group. Ethnicity is played out when important, in other words, it must be socially relevant. "In the history of Brazil, ethnic communities and politics have not been a continuous and when certain groups have mobilized ethnicity it has mostly been in a low key" (Sansone 2003:3). Ethnic conflicts are by no means descriptive of Salvador, and ethnic groups are often, but not always, constructed through struggles and conflicts (Comaroff 1996). Further, ethnicity has to be acknowledged by the individual or the members of the group. According to Eriksen (1993) there is no ethnicity if there is no relation between groups that see themselves as ethnically different from each other. They must also

perceive themselves as culturally different. If we apply the modern, constructivistic approach to the common identity among Afro-Brazilians in Salvador, (that according to Telles (1999) is an ethnic identity), one has to ask; where is the ethnic other? Since the percentage of people who are not Afro-Brazilians in Salvador is very low there are few people who can be considered ethnically different, and as we learnt from Barth (1969), ethnicity is made relevant in close relations to other ethnic groups. Here in lies the problem of seeing what I call a *negro* identity as an ethnic identity.

First of all my informants never used the term Afro-Brazilian, nor did I hear anyone else that I met refer to themselves or others as *Indígenas* (indigenous), Euro-Brazilians, Italian-Brazilian, Portuguese-Brazilian or anything similar. The term Afro-Brazilian was used among my informants to describe the part of the Brazilian culture which is believed to have derived from African slave, not people. In the media and official politics, however, it seems like the only politically correct way when describing Brazil's large black and brown population. Since no one uses the term to describe themselves it indicates that it is a category of classification that nobody identifies with. A lot like the term *pardo* (brown or mulatto). My point is that my informants did not look at themselves as ethnically different than other Brazilians; on the contrary, they all saw themselves as fully Brazilians. The country does celebrate mixture and hybridity both in high-and low-culture (Sansone 2003) and miscegenation is the core of the Brazilian national ideology. This mix is not just ideological, but also very real. Take Iansã for example, she sees herself as a *negra* (she is not very dark skinned, but has Afro-Brazilian characteristics), her mother is white, one of her brothers is white with red hair, another brother is black like her, her own two children are white; one with dark, straight hair the other with curly red hair. This, however, is by no means exceptional for her and her family. The majority of my informants were from families where there was a high degree of mixedness and variations in skin colour. Most of these people also had friends of all colours and shapes. So if being afro-Brazilian or *negro* was an ethnic identity that would mean that they would have to perceive themselves as ethnically different then many of their family members.

Second they do not perceive themselves as culturally different. Salvador and the state of Bahia has always held a vital role in "the making of Africa in Brazil" (Sansone 2003:60), to both popular and elite discourses. It is a common perception among Brazilians that the African contributions to the Brazilian culture and to the Brazilian people have to do with music and dance (Ribeiro2000). This is in accordance with the myth of the three races that further portray the contribution of the Indians as closeness to nature and the Portuguese

heritage is seen as the catalyst of the society in the form of institutions and language (DaMatta 1995). These are features that *all* Brazilians are believed to inhabit. The symbols that my informants relate to and see as the basis for their identity is the same symbols that are considered symbols of Afro-Brazilian culture in general. However, incorporating these symbols into their lives is not the only thing that is considered fundamental for the *negro* identity.

Third Since Eriksen (1993) states that groups have to see themselves as ethnically different based on an idea about cultural difference in order to talk about ethnicity, I argue that these criteria are not fulfilled, and since they are not fulfilled we can not speak of an ethnic identity in this case. Furthermore I argue that the *negro* identity is not a group identity. Sansone (2003) points out in spite of the heavy presence of Afro-Brazilian culture and an Afro-Brazilian population estimated to 82 % in Salvador (Sansone 2003), there is no Afro-Brazilian cohesive community. When speaking about the *communidade negra* (black community) in Salvador it refers to a small community of elite blacks, the majority are black activists (Sansone 2003). My informants are *not* members of this elite, nor do they want to be. It could be argued that we are dealing with a subculture. I am however reluctant to call it a subculture. Being black does not make you a *negro*. It is only one of the criteria. What makes a person a *negro* is also the kind of lifestyle he leads, his attitudes and the choices he makes in addition to his physical appearance. Seeing as subculture often is applied to studies of youth, music and style this would certainly be a good argument for using the term subculture to describe my informants. The problem though is that I never heard them talk about themselves as "we *negros",* and if there was a feeling of group identity it was not something that they emphasised whenever they talked about being *negro*. They do not form a cohesive *negro* community. It is a personal black identity that in my opinion is used as a strategy to overcome the stigma attached to blackness. It is personal because you have to self-identify as a *negro*. If identified as a *negro* by others this has different connotations, usually negative.

I further argue that this black identity is a racial identity because even though being black does not make you a *negro*, you have to be black to call yourself a *negro*. Like Sansone states: "Being of African descent, poor, and even discriminated against are, as such, not enough for a black person to claim some sort of black identity"(Sansone 2003:10). As we saw in the example where Oxumaré talks about being a *negro*, he makes it absolutely clear that he does not feel that he has anything in common with the black man except that they are both black. In the case of the *negro* identity, the first marker that is vital for being a negro is appearance. It is

not the skin colour alone, but also the phenotypical markers like nose, hair, lips and so on. And precisely like Wade (2002) points out, these markers are not just random markers. They are connected to the European colonial history, were differences were perceived as racial. Hence, Wade's main argument that the concept of race is entirely linked to the European way of thinking about difference. Since the concept of race is dependent on its social and historical context it basically means that the marker that the main approach depends on to identify racial differences are not as biologically natural as they are portrayed to be. Only some markers are significant, and they have become significant through history. In sum, the study of race is a part of the European colonial history. The concept of race can not be reduced to some objective signifiers of difference. Which differences are to count is already embedded in the European colonial history (2002).

The racial classification system and the history of Negro

The Brazilian public census classifies people in four categories according to skin colour. These categories are; *Branca*(white), *Amarela* (yellow), *Preta* (Black), *Parda* (brown/mulatto) and *Indígena* (indigenous) (Datafolha 1995, Sansone 2003). When you are asked to fill in the categories they ask you to state your *raça* (race) or *cor* (colour). While the public census operates with five categories, Brazilians themselves classify and describe skin colour by more than 190 different shades and categories (Datafolha 1995). These categories are based on features like skin colour, hair texture, eyes, nose and lips, in other words they are based on phenotypes. The only category that can be perceived as ethnic is the indigenous one. These fluid and ambiguous colour categories mean that one can classify oneself and others differently in different situations and contexts, depending on who you talk to. "Color terms in Brazil are complicated and elided with words used to refer to "racial identities". The words include black (*preto,negro*), white (*branco*), brown or mixed *(moreno, mulato)*, dark (*escuro*), light (*claro)*, closed (*fechado*), freckled (*sarará*), and others, making both color and race ambiguous to insiders and outsiders alike"(Goldstein 2003:6). In my research though, I found that the people that did classify themselves as *negros* did not classify differently in different contexts, however they could apply some other category to describe their actual skin colour. Iansã did this one time she was going to tell me about a friend of hers: "ele é *negro* com pele moreno, igual de mim" (He is negro with brown skin, equal to mine). This further indicates that the *negro* category harbours more than a description of skin colour.

As we can see here *negro* is not an official classification category, but *preto* is. If we again turn to the example I showed in the beginning of this chapter we see that Oxumaré classified the other black man as *Preto*. Meaning simply black and again this is not enough for being a *negro*. Since I did not have any informants that self-identified as *preto* I will use the conclusions drawn from empiric data collected in two neighbourhoods in Salvador provided by Sansone in "Blackness without ethnicity" (2003) to give a better understanding of the difference between *preto* and *negro*. In his fieldwork, Sansone (2003) identified two main types of black informants; those who called themselves *preto* and those who called themselves *negro*. On the contrary to my informants, few of Sansone's informants classified themselves as *negro*. Those who did not classify themselves as *negros* did however use the term in association with popular culture, religion and music (Sansone 2003). He also found that these two types mainly corresponded to two generations, but also to two manners of handling blackness and racial discrimination. Those who declared themselves *negros* where mainly young and better educated, while those that identified as *pretos* consisted of both their parents and older generations as well as younger blacks with little educational skills. "The term *preto* is used by those who seem to accept a certain social immobility" (Sansone 2003:47), or in other words those who accept that there are limitations in social ascending based on blackness. According to Sansone these are the blacks "whose income, education, and status are too low to venture into the play of status and color codes. The term is almost equivalent to bad, uneducated, *brega* (tacky), (…), and is used to describe whatever is visibly poor and without decorum" (Sansone 2003:47).

Sansone (2003) further argues that the term *negro* has become a socio-political category, and the connotations to the term when used in self-identification is black pride. That it is socio-political means that it indicates a particular social and political position. It is a category that can include people with different physical appearance that by others could be classified as *moreno, sarará, preto, escuro* and so on in the colour continuum (see above). It is an implicit political category, but it can also be used explicitly (Sansone 2003). I will return to this explicit use in the chapter 5.

The connotations evoked by the word *negro* are very different than the word *preto*. The former refers more to Negroid phenotype, while the latter refer to the colour black (Sansone 2003). In the beginning of my fieldwork I was very uncertain of which category that was considered appropriate to use about black informants. One day, I was strolling along in the city with Jailson, a very dark-skinned 28-year old man. I already knew him well enough to

know that he self-identified as a *negro* so I asked him if he could clarify the difference between the words *negro* and *preto*. "Well", he said, "*preto* is used to described the colour black. Like black cat or black trousers, or something like that. It is not nice to call someone *preto* because it is almost like you call them a thing, not a person. You see, if you say *seu preto* (you black) to someone it is very offensive. So you really shouldn't call someone *preto*". "What about *negro*, then?" I asked. "You can't call someone *negro* either, without knowing them. Even if many of us call ourselves *negro* today it used to be very offensive. And if you, being white, call someone you don't know for *negro* that person might think that you are racist. No, before you know a person you should call them *moreno* or *morena*. This is safe because, you know we are all *uma mistura* (a mix)".

The meaning attached to the word *negro* has changed considerably in the last century. Like Jailson pointed out it used to be very offensive. Pierson (Pierson 1942 in Sansone 2003) also found that *negro* was perceived as more derogatory compared to *preto* in everyday discourse in the late 1930s. Positive connotations were gradually associated with *negro* in the work of the first ethnographers on black cultural expression in Brazil. Most famous of these scholars is Gilberto Freyre. He and his contemporary looked to the "culture of the *negro*" in order to define the positive cultural contributions from the *negro* to the Brazilian culture (Sansone 2003). Through the work of these ethnographers the term *negro* started gaining some positive connotations, but the popularization of the term is largely contributed to the first black organisation in Brazil the *Frente Negra Brasileira* (Black Brazilian Front). This organisation was active in the 1920s to the mid 1930s when it, like all other political organisations, was banned by the Vargas dictatorship (Sansone 2003). At the end of the era of the Vargas dictatorship there was a new growth in social organisations and new black movements started incorporating *negro* into their name. Like *Movimento Negro Unificado* (the unified black movement) which still exists today (Sansone 2003). The term *negro* has been increasingly popular in everyday discourse and there have been debates on whether to include it as one of the categories in the official national census (Datafolha 1995).

Earlier in this chapter I compared my informants to those of Goldstein (2003) to show that being Afro-Brazilian from the lower classes in Salvador might be different than being Afro-Brazilian from the lower classes in Rio de Janeiro or elsewhere in Brazil. To get an understanding of why the situation for Afro-Brazilians in Salvador is different from that of Rio de Janeiro (Goldstein) or south eastern Brazil (Windance Twine 1998) I will in the following bring the negro-identity discussed above into a wider context. The *negro* identity is

developed within the context of Afro-Bahian culture. The traditional Afro-Bahian culture enjoys considerable recognition from official institutions, local as well as national as can be seen in names like the cradle of Afro Brazilian culture or Black Rome. The Afro-Bahian culture is perceived as "purer" than other forms of Afro-Brazilian culture found in other states like Rio de Janeiro and Maranhão. In Rio de Janeiro the black culture is centred on carnival, samba and the "impure" form of afro-Brazilian religion called *umbanda* (a mix of African deities, spiritism and popular Catholisicm). In Salvador the Afro-Brazilian (or Afro-Bahian) culture is centred on Candomblé (Sansone 2003). This Afro-Brazilian religion is perceived as a "purer" form i.e. more "authentic" and more African. In the examples presented above we can see that my informant talk about symbols like acarajé and capoeira. In the following I will present and elaborate on the main symbols of Afro-Bahian culture by presenting a description of how Afro-Brazilian culture and symbols are present in the old, historical part of Salvador. I do not make a great distinction between Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Bahian culture. First of all because the locals do not make such a distinction, second the definition of Afro-Bahian culture as centred on candomblé is very narrow and third because other forms of Afro-Brazilian culture in other parts of Brazil is believed to have derived from Afro-Bahian culture (Sansone 2003). Hence the nickname "the cradle of Afro-Brazilian culture". Here I would like to note that I do not understand culture as a defined entity that is shared equally by those who participate in it. Rather my understanding of culture lies closer to that of Henrietta Moore (1999) were culture is seen as "a series of sites of contested representation and resistance within fields of power" (Moore 1999:11). I do not see the Afro-Bahian culture as oppositional to other forms of Brazilian culture, because it has been recognized by several official institutions and in many ways Afro-Brazilian culture has become synonymous with Brazilianess (Sansone 2003).

A typical Tuesday in the cradle of afro-Brazilian culture

The historical part of Salvador, locally referred to as *Pelourinho* or simply *Pelô,* has large and beautifully restored colonial buildings painted in bright pastel colours. Historically this area was inhabited by the Portuguese urban elite, but *Pelourinho* meaning "whipping post" is also where the slaves were tortured and auctioned off. Today it is a thriving Mecca for tourists and this is where you go to find the music, the art, the clothes, the museums, the historical monuments and many of the institutions that are fundamental for what is perceived as the Afro-Brazilian culture. Here it is in the open and accessible to the public, it is almost like a cultural shopping window. Entering the area what first strikes you is the mixture of people and the loudness of several musical rhythms pouring into the streets. People of all colours, sizes, nationalities and ages are mingling in the streets. Small drink-and food stalls are scattered around the squares with tropical fruits displayed on the counters, sizzling hot-dogs on the grill and buzzing blenders making tasty drinks. Some people choose to get their hair braided while others try to wave off aggressive street sellers. Occasionally someone might make an approach to see if you are interested in a guided tour to one of the city's houses of Candomblé. Wandering from the squares and into the streets the strong smell of fried *Acarajé* (local fast-food) is unavoidable as there are *baianas* selling this food on every street corner. The *baianas* are all dressed in big, white and layered dresses and white cloth wheeled into a turban-looking headpiece. They sit behind their small stalls and turn the *Acarajé* around in the frying pan for hours and never seem to run out of hungry customers. As one of the most famous symbols of Salvador and Afro-Brazilian culture these women are not only associated with bahian fast-food and cuisine but also with the religious aspect of afro-Brazilian culture: candomblé. I will return to this later on in this chapter.

Pelourinho harbours a vast selection of street bars, simple diners and classy, chic restaurants. The menus span from small *tira gostos* (finger food) to international food and dishes from the Bahian cuisine. The air is dense with myriads of different smells of food, perfumes and bodily odours in the humidity of this crowded space. However, the smell of *Acarajé* penetrates it all. Most locals are found around small plastic tables sipping on a glass of beer at one of the many street bars. Watching as people are walking by and listening to a singer with his acoustic guitar or trying to communicate through the deafening sound of *Pagode* (a Brazilian music style), blasting out from several loudspeakers. All of this occasionally drowns in the beat of percussion bands as they "tour" the streets of Pelô. The beat is evocative of African rythms and easily recognizable. It is the basis rhythm of all afro pop and afro reggae music, and the

crowd join in. Along side the restaurants and street bars there are hundreds of small shops selling Afro-Brazilian artefacts. The most typical products are capoeira trouser, paintings, instruments, music and small carved wooden or clay figures of baianas or capoeiristas.

On several of the large squares there are people standing in circles, singing and clapping their hands to the rhythm of a drum. Inside the circle there are to people playing the Brazilian martial art called capoeira and it is impressive to se the way they control their bodies. Capoeira was originally the slave's way of resistance to the prohibition of exercising or fighting. They kick, duck, spin around and make incredible somersaults and the whole time they have to be intensively focused not to hit each other. They play in to different styles; the slow style (called Angola) where they move mostly around the ground and really close together. The other style (called "Regional") is a lot faster and the players keep their bodies further apart, but if you make the wrong move the opponents' attack will send you to the ground. Which styled that is being played out depends on the rhythms of the *berimbau,* a stringed instrument that is played by beating a small wooden stick on the string while the other hand holds a small stone to the string that gives different tones. This part of town is filled with tourists at all hours. They carry cameras to record the cultural legacy of the Africans situated within the colonial buildings of the Portuguese well preserved and still a very central part of the city. Unfortunately the tourists also attract a lot of criminals but with the friendly "African" atmosphere and the crowds of happy people in the cobblestone streets it is easy not to notice the thieves that are looking for an easy prey. To protect the tourists the local authorities has virtually placed a policeman on every corner, and the tourist guides tries to hurry on their groups as they pass through the neighbourhood. Several times during the night you see people, always young, black men (with no exception), lined up with the hands against the walls. The police shouting at them, pointing a large automatic gun to their heads and occasionally they hit them brutally. They search them and all this is in the plane sight of people passing by. As the police continue patrolling the area the beggars, the drug addicts and the street kids scatter, but as soon as the police is out of sight they reappear. They are very aggressive and do not take no for an answer. They cling to people and won't let go until they have received some spare change or some leftovers from the people at the restaurants. They can stare at you for a long time, rubbing their stomachs and making sad faces that is hard to ignore. Their clothing is smeared with dirt and many have physical defects that they "throw" in ones face as they beg for money, and if you do not reach into you pockets they can become threatening and verbally abusive.

The purpose of the description above is to show which cultural elements that are seen as Afro-Brazilian by tourists as well as the great majority of Brazilians. The baianas, the cuisine, the music, the capoeira, candomblé, and last but not least Pelourinho itself are key symbols and highlighted in tourist guides, celebrations and have become the main ingredients of *baiandade* (bahianess). My concern is not to what degree these symbols are "authentic" or "African" although Sansone (2003) gives an interesting account for the use and abuse of Africa in Salvador. Rather my interest lies in presenting the symbols that are considered Afro-Brazilian by the majority of Brazilians.

Capoeira:

In the views of my self-identified *negro* informants among the only pure form of the martial art of *capoeira* is the style called *Angola*. Contrary to the *Regional* style that was created by mestre Bimba, Angola style is believed to be closer to its African roots. Many of the *capoeiristas* actually believe it to be pure and unchanged since the days of slavery. This, they say, is the real camouflaged way of fighting or keeping fit that the slaves used as a mode of resistance. But my informants also underpin that Angola is much more than a form of martial art. It is culture, tradition, roots, heritage, and values and most importantly it is a way of life. To call oneself *negro/a* one does not have to be a *capoeirista*, but if you choose to be one the true style is Angola. Both of my key informants play *capoeira* (Angola-style) on a regular basis. *Capoeira* achieved status as a national sport in the 1920s and 1930s through the acceptance on behalf of the masters of *Capoeira* and their schools that knifes and rocks had to be prohibited. It was no longer to be a street fights amongst marginalized youth but transformed into the Brazilian form of martial art. Physical contact was also restricted and made a part of the conditions in this process of status transformation (Sansone 2003). It was in this period that *capoeira* was divided into the two present day forms of *Angola* and *Regional*. Different rules, political relationships and associations apply to the two schools. Interestingly it has become one of Brazils most exported "commodities" and the majority of schools founded in Europe are Angola-style capoeira.

Baianas or mulheres de Acarajé (Acarajé women):

These ladies smile to you from every postcard stand, tourist magazine and TV commercials, as well as on virtually every street corner. They look stunning in their *pano da costa* (big, white dresses made from an embroiled cotton fabric that is said to be authentic African) and usually they are very dark skinned. They sell sweets and the Afro-Brazilian local food called

Acarajé on every street corner, hence the name *mulheres de Acrajé* (the *Acarajé* women). For centuries these ladies have been one of the most visible signs or symbols of Afro-Brazilian culture in public spaces (Sansone 2003). Around their neck, but underneath their clothes they wear colourful beaded necklaces that are called *contas*. The necklaces show their relationship to the religion of Candomblé and serve as protection against bad spirits and *macumba* (black magic). The colour of the beads is associated with one particular afro-Brazilian *orixá* (energies or deities). One should never reveal one's particular relationship with one's personal *orixá* as this is a way of revealing one's weak spots. Hence the necklaces are worn beneath the clothes. The Baianas are particularly essential to one of the most important annual rituals in Salvador; the washing of the stairs of the church of the good lord (for a detailed description of the ritual see Silverstein 1995). In the past however the baianas were considered a matter of public concern because of their connection with candomblé and their capacity to perform black magic (Sansone 2003).

Bahian Cuisine:

Food from Bahia is known in Brazil as spicy with the core ingredient *dendê* (palm oil) (Winddance Twine 1998). This ingredient has a special place in Bahia and Afro-Brazilian culture. Like the Baianas, the Bahian cuisine has also witnessed an inversion of value. Today it is celebrated as the "African contribution to Brazilian national cuisine" (Sansone 2003:71) and a natural part of the daily consumption for the lower classes. People from the middle- and upper classes consume it mostly on special occasions and national holidays. It is said to be invented during slavery and made out of whatever ingredients the slaves had at hand and as such it is believed to be a mixture of Portuguese, Indian and Negro influence. Thus another way of expressing the national myth of the three races. Today it is valued as not only of Afro-Brazilian importance, but also has a national status. Until the 1930s however this was not the case. Then the middle-and upper classes regarded it as unhealthy and filthy. In fact everything prepared with *dendê* or containing *dendê* was only fit for *negros* (Sansone 2003:71). The palm oil is also an important ingredient in food offerings to the *orixás* of Candomblé and a local slang expression calls a person of candomblé *ser de azeite* (to be from/in oil). It depends on the use of the term and the context whether it is conceived as acceptable and quite humoristic (between friends of different religions) or as a derogatory term. There are also many capoiera songs dealing with *dendê* and the people and powers of *dendê*.

Music:

The percussion bands described in the empirical account is just one of many styles of music that is considered Afro-Brazilian. It has a particular style of dance moves and a *batuque* (drum beat) that gives connotations to *candomblé*. The most famous both nationally and internationally of these bands are *Olodum* which has made it their task to raise black consciousness through their music. The name *Olodum* is from candomblé and it is the name of a particular orixá (deity). They also have a lot of social programs in various *favelas* (shantytowns). Every Tuesday they play live in *Pelourinho* but because of their fame the entrance fee reaches new heights every year. The smaller percussion bands in the streets are in many ways small replicas of *Olodum*. Many of my self-identified informants seem to think that the glorious days of *Olodum* are over and today the band is just a shadow of itself. They also see the band as too commercialised and drifting away from the true cause, namely black power. The drum beat, however, is found in many other band linked to Afro-Brazilian culture, and my informants frequent arenas where these bands play.

Candomblé:

It is the core symbol and bone marrow of Afro-Bahian culture and as I said earlier the Afro-Bahian culture is centred on the religious system of candomblé (Sansone 2003). All of the above symbols of Afro-Brazilian culture are in some ways linked to this religion. The baianas through *dendê*(palm oil) and their allegiance to candomblé. They are either *mãe-de-santos* (Candomblé priestess or mother of the saints) or *filha-de-santos* (daughter of the saints). The Bahian cuisine is also connected through the main ingredients dendê and the food offerings to the *orixás*(deities). The capoeira through songs of *dendê* and the power and strength the oil is believed to contain. And at last the music is inspired by the beats of Candomblé drumming. The importance of Candomblé in Afro-Brazilian and in particular in Afro-Bahian culture can also be seen in the "Museu Afro Brasileiro" (The Afro-Brazilian museum) which is situated at the heart of *Pelourinho*. The museums collection is almost entirely focusing on artefacts used in Candomblé and to underline the African origin of the artefacts they are placed alongside its African counterparts. The largest room in the museum is dedicated to the *orixás*. Side by side they are carved out on large wooden plates with a metallic sign underneath explaining each deity's "working area". Candomblé is the most orthodox of the Afro-Brazilian religions and the *candomblé* houses in Salvador are renowned and are often looked to as an inspirational source for other Afro-Brazilian cults or religions in Brazil. The African word Candomblé

actually means a dance in the honour of the gods and during the sessions the sons and daughters of the *terreiro* (Candomblé house) are possessed by the *orixás*. The sessions go on for hours and the possessed dance the particular dance of the orixá that has entered their bodies. *Candomblé* is more than a religion; it is also a community whit a lot of social functions.

My self-identified *negro* informants clearly relate to the symbols of Afro-Bahian culture that I have presented above. They play Angola-style *capoeira*, eat *acarajé*, listen and dance to the music and some of them are *candomblé*-followers. Afro-Bahian traditional culture is clearly a foundation and a source of inspiration for my informants in their constrction of blackness. In this chapter I have accounted for why and how my informants self-identify as *negros* and what meanings they attach to it. I have tried to show that the negro identity is used to demarcate oneself as a person conscious of his or hers African ancestry and cultural heritance coupled with a certain lifestyle and attitudes. Whether a person looks at him or herself as a *negro/ negra* (black male and female) is then dependent on the individual's self-reflection, and that is why people with lighter skin colour as well as the *azulzados* (very dark skinned, almost bluish black) can embrace the term. It does not simply apply to dark brown shades of skin colour. What matters is that the person must have physical or phenotypical characteristics that are perceived as African, like a certain hair texture, shape of the nose and lips. But as I have showed appearance alone does not make a person *negro* or *negra*. Like Sansone states "(…) in Latin America black identity is usually non-confrontational and does not play a key role in the political arena" (Sansone 2003:17). When my informants self-identify as *negro* there is an implicit political statement of recognizing the black people's historically subjugated position in Brazil, but the personal negro identity is not used (by my informants) in political confrontations. Hence, it is a non-confrontational identity in the way that it is used by my informants. Applying the framework of DaMatta (1995) for studying Brazil will perhaps make it easier to understand how an identity like the *negro* identity is not confrontational. DaMatta (1995) points to the Brazilian logic as mediating, and by that he means that Brazilians constantly mediates between contradictions. As I have argued the *negro* identity is used to overcome stigma attached to blackness. It is not (in the way that my informants use it) used to confront whites. Rather I think it is used to mediate between the stigmatization of blackness and racism on one side and the idea of racial democracy and the reality of miscegenation on the other. I will again emphasise that my self-identified *negro* informants presented in this chapter are not part of the black movement. In chapter 5 I will

argue that when the *negro* identity is used in a confrontational way (or explicit political way) it breaks with the racial colour continuum, with the ideology of mixedness and with the mediating logic that According to DaMatta (1995) characterise Brazil. I argue that this is partly the reason for why my informants do not want to become activists for the black movement. Before venturing into the cultural and political arenas of the black movement I will in the next chapter deal with racism in Salvador.

4. PREFERENCE FOR WHITE

Brazil has no legally sanctioned racism, but that does not mean that structures of racism are not present in everyday experience. Social scientists doing research on racism in Brazil usually portray and describe these structures as subtle and "conveyed through indirect forms of communication (…)" (Goldstein 2003:105). These indirect forms make it difficult to describe and challenge racist practice and the significance of them (Goldstein 2003). Several researchers call for more studies that approaches racism by focusing on local discourses on racism, race, colour, prejudices in everyday life (Goldstein 2003, Sheriff 2001, Winddance Twine). Such studies (Goldstein 2003, Sheriff 2001) have shown that the myth of racial democracy might not be agreed upon by the large majority of the population, at least not to the extent where Afro-Brazilians from the lower classes harbour a false consciousness that disable them to be aware of racism. In this chapter I will account for what my informants perceive as racism in everyday life. Through statements, narratives and conversations offered by my informants I try to point out some of the arenas they identified where subtle racism is expressed. As will become evident in this chapter my data suggest that young blacks in Salvador are highly aware of subtle forms of racism. The statements presented by my informants I argue, indicates that among them there is no lack of consciousness in relation to racism and the significance that racism have in everyday life and in upward social mobility.

Boa aparencia (good appearance)

One day in March, just as the city was getting back on its feet after carnival, Oxumaré wanted me to come along to visit a good friend of him. His friend Marco is 39 years old very dark skinned Afro-Brazilian man. He owns a store where he sells health products in addition to being a musician and a photographer. Marco greats us with a great smile at the entrance of his store and waved us inside. Just inside the doorway there is a large blackboard with pictures of children and adults of all skin colours. A handwritten piece of cardboard informs me that I can have my picture taken for 3R$(about 9 NOK). Alongside the turquoise-painted walls, are small jars filled with all kinds of health care products, and there is also a large collection of handmade necklaces and bracelets made from natural material like seeds from *açai* (an Amazonian fruit). A customer calls for Marcos attention and he passionately explains to her the contents and effects of using the different products. About five minutes later the woman leaves and Marco sits down behind a large wooden table in the corner of the store. Oxumaré and I are already seated in a comfortable sofa on the other end of the table. We engage in a

conversation about the upcoming soccer game, the weather and he talks about the benefits of making healthcare products a part of ones life. I tell him about my project and I ask him if he could think of any situations where skin colour is important and soon it turns into a conversation between Oxumaré and Marco:

Marco- In the 80s I used to have long rasta hair which at the time was not common at all. Back then it was a symbol of resistance and rebellion. I was actually stopped many times by the police because of my hair. Today it is different. Today it is fashion to have all kinds of hairstyles and braids, and many consider it beautiful. But in the 70ties and 80ties it was not like that. In the 80s I was working in an office. I had this long Rasta hair, and one day my boss asked me to cut my hair. *Os brancos* (the white men) who worked there also had long hair but they were not asked to cut theirs. I asked the boss why I had to cut mine while the others could keep theirs, but he did not give me an answer. I knew why. Because I was black and had rasta hair. Cutting my hair would be like giving into the system. So I had to leave the job. The black girls who worked in the same place used to put on make up in order to look whiter. The powdered themselves, and went to the hairdresser to straighten out their hair. There have been a lot of changes and progress since then, but skin colour is still important in many ways.

Oxumaré -Another thing is that if a black person enters a store he would never get the same attention as someone with your looks. You know, fair-skinned, blond hair, blue eyes. I have experienced this myself, even though I am not very dark skinned. Many times I have walked in to stores looking to buy something, but the people that work there do not even ask me if I need help. Even when I signal to them that I need help, they ignore me. So I have to find the things I need on my own. When I walk towards the register and they see that I am actually going to buy something, then they get off their feet and become friendly and helpful.

Marco- yeah, that is true. You can just look at the shopping centres and see that *O perfil* (the profile) is white. The people who work there are light skinned, and the style is white. There are stores where *o perfil* (the profile) is *negro*, but usually you will not find these stores at the shopping malls. Like Oxumaré said, people are treated differently. The lighter the skin of the customer the more attention and pleasant talk the customer will receive. If you are black you usually just get a short question if there is something they can help you with. Not very forthcoming, but it is a bit better today than 20 years ago. One Christmas I was working in the shopping *Barra* (one of the biggest and most exclusive shopping centres in Salvador). I was

hired to take pictures of children sitting on *papai noel* (Santa Claus') lap. One day I arrived at work with my rasta hair hanging loose. I had not tied it up in a not and it was big! I was told by the people responsible that wearing my hair like that was not compatible with the image of the shopping *Barra,* and that I was not wanted as a photographer anymore. If I wanted to, I could have made a lot of fuss and called the police because this was a violation of the Brazilian law against racism. But I did not. Instead I put on a Santa Claus costume and sat down in a chair. Many children came and sat down on my lap. It seemed that they had nothing against a "Rasta Santa Claus". After this incident I never went back to work at Shopping *Barra*.

Oxumaré-You see, most of the shop owners are whites. Very few of the clerks are blacks. If a black woman comes to a job interview, and have a lot of work experience from other shops it is almost always a *branca* (white woman) or a *parda* (brown woman) that ends up getting the job. Even if they have less experience. Many times the employer is not interested in looking at the CV. They are more interested in the photo of the person who is applying for a job. So even if hiring a black woman might increase the sale because, as you know most of the people here in Salvador are blacks they choose to hire the one with the lightest skin. This is how it works in the job market, not only in shops.

Marco.- You should look at the advertisings in the news papers. It is often written at the bottom that they are looking for people with *Boa aparencia* (good appearance). Everybody knows that it does not only mean that you have to be neat and tidy. It means that the applicant should have light skin and light eyes. I work as a freelance photographer and I see it every day. Black girls are powdering themselves whiter because they know how important the photo on the CV is. The lighter the better…

In the conversation presented above my informants tell of numerous situations they have experienced, where they believe that their skin colour and Afro-Brazilian characteristics were of importance for the treatment they received. The two men point to several arenas where, in their opinion, there is a difference in the way that blacks and whites are treated. As we see in the conversation their examples span from beauty ideals, body language and prejudices concerning the economical status of blacks to white urban spaces/places and the job market. In the following I will try to shed some light on the arenas identified by Oxumaré and Marco by connecting it to statements from other informants. I will use the term paragraph when referring to different parts or sections of the conversation.

Translated into English *boa aparencia* literally means good appearance, but the connotations of the expression goes beyond being neat and tidy or good looking. My first personal experience with *boa aparencia* was when I was asked by a friend if I was interested in a particular job. I politely turned down the offer and in response my friend asked: "do you have any acquaintances that could be interested? Someone with *boa aparencia*, like yourself?" I asked him what he meant with "*boa aparencia* like mine". He answered: you know, with white skin, blond hair and preferably light eyes. At the time I discarded it as just his own preference and personal opinion about what *boa aparencia* meant, but as my field work progressed I became aware that the *boa aparencia*-expression seemed to be commented upon mostly in relation to work. When I asked my informants I was told time and time again that the expression refers to a beauty ideal like blond hair, light-coloured eyes and fair skin, or in other words markers of European ancestry. It was particularly expressed in relation to job applicants and the job market. As Marco pointed out in the example above the expression is often placed at the bottom of a job advertisement, and judging from Goldstein's (2003) experiences it is not something that is typical for Salvador. During her fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro she found that "many jobs required a *boa aparencia*, which literally means a "good appearance" but more often is a thinly disguised discriminatory phrase placed or implied in job advertisements and meant to discourage dark-skinned people from applying"(Goldstein 2003:60).

Job market

Rodrigo, a black 31 year old university student, told me a story of one time he applied for a job at the *Shopping Iguatemi* (one of the largest shopping centres in Salvador). A friend of him, Christina, worked in a shoe store at the shopping centre and she knew that there was another store that had a vacant position. She, herself 26 years old, light skinned with long black and strait hair, told Rodrigo to apply for the job at the other store. After talking to a lot of people and friends that work at different shopping centres I have learnt that the shopping centres are divided into high class and not so high class stores. The store that Rodrigo went to with his CV was categorized (by him and Christina) as a clothing store with a clientele from the middle class, a fairly high class store. The manager of the store took his CV, but told him that they had already hired someone else. Christina thought this was a bit odd, so together they told another friend to go to the same store and apply for a job. This friend has considerably lighter skin than Rodrigo and his educational level is much lower. Neither he nor Rodrigo had any work experience as sales clerks. Never the less the friend brought his CV to

the store and was offered the position just one day after Rodrigo was rejected and told that the position had already been filled. Rodrigo concluded the story by stating that it was hard for him not to see this incident as a situation were skin colour did matter. If we see Rodrigos story in relation to the conversation between Oxumaré and Marco this coincides with the 4th paragraph were Oxumaré talks about the preference for lighter skin when hiring people in the job market.

In the city picture markers of Afro-Brazilian culture is very visible; I am here referring to styles of braided hair, colourful African inspired clothing and jewellery, the martial art of *capoeira* and the famous *baianas* and so on. On the other hand there are several arenas where these markers are virtually invisible. The conversation between my two informants, presented in the beginning of this chapter, revealed that shopping centres are identified as one such arena. The profile of the shopping centres is European and white, according to them. When observing the three largest shopping centres in Salvador (shopping *Barra*, shopping *Iguatemi* and the *Aeroclub*) what I saw was first of all that most of the people frequenting the shopping centres are considerably fairer skinned than the common city dweller you see in the street. Second the few black people working there seem to be downplaying their Afro-Brazilian side by not wearing the markers referred to above. Among the shop assistants there were also few that I would consider very dark skinned, while almost all of the security guards were.

1st of May 2005 an article was presented in the local newspaper *A Tarde* with the title *Trabalhador ainda vive sob stigma da cor* (worker still live under the stigma of colour). The article concludes that even though it has passed 117 years since the abolition of slavery black Brazilians still struggle to enter the job market. Based on numbers collected between 1998 and 2004 and a survey conducted at the largest shopping centre in Salvador in 2003, *Shopping Iguatemi* the article reveals that 86% of the black population is considered active in the working force, of them 26,4% are unemployed. Further the numbers reveal that when working blacks have an average income of 575R$ (approximately 1700 NOK). The numbers also shows that for non-blacks the unemployment rate drops to 18, 1%. The average income for this group is 1148R$ (approximately 3400 NOK) which is the double of the average income for blacks. In this survey blacks are considered *pretos* (blacks) and *pardos* (browns), and non-blacks are *brancos* (whites) and *amarelos* (yellow). These numbers are, according to the newspaper, only one of the indications of how the job market continues to take skin colour when hiring personnel into account. Like many of my informants pointed out and which is also in accordance with the article printed in *A Tarde*(A Tarde 01.05.2005), shopping centres

are one of the places in Salvador where the absence of Afro-Brazilians as working force becomes apparent. The survey conducted by the administration of *Iguatemi* in 2003 was carried out in order to get to know the profile of the working force at the shopping centre. The focus was the *questão racial* (racial question) (A Tarde 01.05.2005). The survey of *Shopping Iguatemi* in 2003 also presents the composition off the staff in relation to sexes, colour or race and level of education. According to the numbers (based on self-declaration of skin colour) 48, 3% of the workers are *parda*(brown) or *morena* (brown), 37,4 % are *branca* (white), 13,6 % are *negra* (black) while 0,1 % declared themselves yellow. Further 33, 8% of the workers are male while 65, 7% are female and as many as 75% have completed *2˚ grau* (equivalent to high school). The vast majority of *negros* (blacks) and *pardos* (browns) hold positions as security guards and cleaning personnel, but as clerks in trendy stores are scarce. And when they do work in such stores extremely few are in managing positions. The numbers shows that while 53 % of the white workers are managers only 7, 9% of the black workers hold the same position. When it comes to owners 87, 9% of them are white, 9.1% are *pardas*, 7% *morenas* but none are black (A Tarde 01.05.05).

The survey presented above seem too indicate a difference in income and employment between non-blacks and blacks (black are here brown and black). Carl Degler (1971 in Sheriff 2001) proposed a thesis that he named "the mulatto escape hatch". Based on a comparative analysis between the United States and Brazil regarding race relation he argued that light-skinned mulattos in Brazil occupied a social position between the white elite and the poor blacks. He argued that because of their lighter skin colour they had greater possibilities for social upward mobility. However, as Sheriff points out, his argument is not based on ethnographic material, but on literature and historical archives. It should also be remembered that a lot of the literature on the mulatto is celebrating the mulatto as a national symbol (Sansone 2003). The survey I have presented indicates that *pardas* and *morenas* (lighter skinned) are a bit better off than darker blacks. Yet, the gap between non-blacks and black (here including brown and black) is far greater than the gap between the lighter and the darker blacks. The alleged socio-economic advantage of mulattos or "the mulatto escape hatch" has been challenged in the last decades (Sheriff 2001). This has especially been the case in quantitative research aiming at unveiling structures of racial discrimination in Brazil (Sheriff 2001, Reichmann 1999). Particularly known are Carlos Hasenbalg and Nelson do Valle Silva. In "Racial differences in income: Brazil, 1988" Valle Silva (1999) concludes that there is no evidence of a "mulatto escape hatch" when it comes to employment and income. Rather, he

says, there is evidence of a clearer cut line between whites and black in the labour market where whites score a lot higher in income and work opportunities (Valle Silva 1999).

> Despite research findings that show little difference in social mobility between darker- and lighter-skinned mixed-race people, the belief in color as determining factor of one's chances in life seems to persist and frames many of the everyday commentaries on race and color (….)(Goldstein 2003:109).

Like Goldstein's informants in Rio de Janeiro, my informants (as we have seen in this chapter) also expressed believes of skin colour as determining in social upward mobility. However, in a city like Salvador with such a high percentage of Afro-Brazilians, the example where Rodrigo did not get a job while his lighter skin friend got it instead, indicates that the beliefs in skin colour as determining in social mobility is a reality.

Automatic assumption regarding skin colour and economical status

Stories involving different treatment of blacks in stores turned out to be the most common example given by my informants when asked about racism in Salvador. In the second paragraph of the conversation presented in the beginning, Oxumaré talks about the different treatment of white and black costumers. He has on several occasions told me concrete stories involving him and other friends being treated with ignorance in different stores. When he states that he only receives help from the shop assistants when they actually se that he is going to buy something he clearly insinuates what I call economical prejudices against blacks. By this I mean that there seem to a strong notion linking black skin to poverty. That blacks are overrepresented in the lower economical classes in Salvador is well known and documented (Sansone 2003). One need only take a round trip in the poorer neighbourhoods of the city to see that blacks dominate these areas. This is of course what could be expected as the city's inhabitants are estimated to 82 % afro Brazilians (Sansone 2003). What is however more telling is that when visiting rich neighbourhoods blacks are virtually absent when not counting the people working as *porteiros* (door men), street cleaners or domestic servants. The prejudices linking black skin colour to poverty are, however, not only held by whites as I will show in the following example.

Iansã's brother has had great success after leaving university and today he is the owner of his own private college. One day he had forgotten something at his office and had to return to pick it up in the evening. He drove his car, an expensive one, up to the gates of the college

and rolled down his window. The security guard at campus asked him what he wanted. He told him what his errand was, but the guard would not open the gate. Iansã's brother told him who he was, but the guard refused to let him in. "I can not let you in just because you have borrowed the car of your *padrão*", he said. The word *padrão* translates into superior or master in English. This was the word used for the white landowners at the time of slavery, and the word is used today much in the same way. This example shows that the economical prejudices are not held only by whites against blacks. It is also held by blacks against blacks. In my opinion, this further indicates some of the extent of institutionalizes racism in the Brazilian society. The most extensive Brazilian survey and analysis of prejudices in relation to skin colour was carried out in 1995 by the Instituto de Pesquisas Datafolha (Datafolha 1995). The aim of the analysis was to estimate the extent of racism in Brazil. It revealed that 89 % of the 5000 Brazilians interviewed acknowledge the existence of prejudices in relation to skin colour, but denied harbouring such prejudices. However, through indirectly pronouncing or affirming prejudice statements approximately 87 % revealed some form of prejudices against blacks (Datafolha 1995). In sum then, Brazilians acknowledges that there are prejudices against blacks, but deny harbouring such prejudices themselves. On the other hand, indirectly the vast majority demonstrate harbouring prejudices towards blacks. According to the results of the research blacks also expressed some forms of prejudices against blacks. An example is when asked "a good black is a black with a white soul" 48% of the blacks interviewed agreed totally or partially. The researcher interpreted this not as proper racism, but as a case of low self-esteem resulting from the high degree of racism rooted in the Brazilian society. So much so that the proper black repeats negative prejudices about themselves (Datafolha 1995). It was also revealed that there were no difference in the degree of racism between metropolitan areas and small scale societies. The results were almost identical, as was also the case in relation to income. But the population of Northeast Brazil, where the miscegenation is greatest, revealed the highest percentage of racist prejudices. In sum then the Datafolha survey (1995) reveals an extensive occurrence of racist prejudices but the Brazilians denies harbouring such prejudices (Reichmann 1999).

All the narratives I have presented so far in this chapter are concerned with different ways of discrimination based on skin colour. There is also a clear insinuation of economical prejudices linked to being black as we have seen in the different stories about shopping incidents and the last example with Iansã's brother. Rodrigos story about not being hired by the store even though there was a vacancy, also point out what Oxumaré said in the conversation with Marco

about the preference for white. The importance of the connection between whiteness and the job market becomes especially apparent when Afro-Brazilian girls powder themselves whiter and do *escova* (straighten out their curly hair) on a weekly basis. In my opinion all of the above examples more than indicate that skin colour could be significant in social mobility as suggested by many researchers (Goldstein 2003, Sansone 2003, Sheriff 2001, Reichmann 1999). Goldstein (2003) talks about hierarchies of beauty and social mobility and how her female informants are fully aware that Brazil is not a racial democracy, but that there are ways to manipulate African characteristics in order to climb the social mobility ladder. When comparing the findings of Goldstein (2003) to the conversation and stories from my informants it seems to coincide quite well in relation to the understanding of *boa aparencia* as a barrier for social mobility. There are contexts were black, especially when mixed with white, is considered beautiful. However, white is at the very top of the hierarchy of beauty. As we saw in the conversation black girls powder themselves and straighten their hair to manipulate their appearance in order to enhance their chances in the job market. The very expression *boa aparencia* itself becomes an encoded or implicit message of the preference for white. It is encoded because the preference for white is never directly expressed (Goldstein 2003). For instance in a job advertisement it does not explicitly say that European markers of ancestry is preferred. But the expression *boa aparencia* is understood as a preference of white, as we saw in the conversation with Oxumaré and Marco. The consequences and limitations regarding *boa aparencia* is common knowledge and as such there is no need to discuss the issue openly (Goldstein 2003, Sheriff 2001). Like Goldstein (2003), Sheriff (2001) also found that her Afro-Brazilian informants were acutely aware of racism, but hardly ever spoke of it. "The discussion of issues related to racial prejudices and discrimination in everyday discourse is, relatively speaking, a rarity, and this appears to be true, (…), of all colors and social classes in Brazil (Sheriff 2001:59)." The silence surrounding racism she calls Cultural censorship. By this she means the code or the common knowledge of silence in relation to racism. It is rarely talked about, but everyone is aware of its existence. In my opinion *boa aparencia* provides a good example of what Sheriff (2001) calls cultural censorship around racial issues.

Police violence

When asked direct question about the way that racism works in Brazil several informants used the police as an example. In particular they emphasised the way that the police, according to my informants, always go after blacks. Police raids on buses, in markets or on the street

occurs frequently in Salvador, but according to my informants the police always treat blacks in a violent manner and conduct harsh body searches. White people, according to my informants, are seldom the target of raids like these. In the following I will present the story of José. He is a very dark-skinned 28-year old Afro-Brazilian (self-identified *negro*) and we were introduced through my key informant Iansã. José lives with his aunt in one of Salvador's suburbs making a living as a *porteiro* (door-man). To increase his meagre income of 1 minimum salary he also uses his experience as a *sapateiro* (shoemaker) to fix and mend his neighbours' broken shoes. After meeting him at social gatherings several times he agreed to give me an indebt interview, but he wanted it to be conducted in his house so that I could see how and where he lived. So, a very hot and humid afternoon I arrived in a large neighbourhood on the outskirts of Salvador after a 1, 5 hour buss ride from the city centre. The humidity on the crowded bus was incredible and our clothes were sticking to our bodies as we finally made our way out of the wiggly bus at the last stop. José took me a white painted two floor house further down the street (one of the very few painted houses in the neighbourhood as far as I could see). He unlocked the big iron door, and out jumped a large, black dog. José grabbed him and said "he is for protection. We need all the protection we can get out here. Just look at our windows. You see how narrow they are? It is because in that way nobody can climb in through them."

We entered the spartanly furnished living room. The walls lacked paint and had no decorating elements like pictures or posters. In the corner, behind the sofa were all his tools to mend shoes spread out on the floor. After a short tour of the house, José made refreshing lemonade and we sat down at the large dinner table. We chatted for some minutes about some mutual acquaintances, before I asked him to tell me about his life. He gave me an intriguing account of how he grew up in a very poor household in another state. That his father has 35 children and never contributed economically, but still has a lot of *carinho* (care, love) for all his children. José had to quit school in the 8th series and started working selling fruit and popsicles when he was eight. "I spent my childhood in that market", he said before he continued on to tell me about the man who took him under his wing and taught him the trade of a shoemaker. After some years working full time as a shoemaker José moved to Salvador when he was about seventeen or eighteen. I asked him if he had an opinion or experiences with *preconceito* (prejudices) or racism. He looked at me for a moment, folded his hands and looked down on the floor. "I will tell you about an incident that I usually do not tell anyone. I do not like to talk about it:

It was in 1991 that I was at the wrong place at the wrong time. Because of this, today I have a criminal record. I was in a neighbourhood, a rough one, you know. It was really hot so I had no shirt on and I had just bought myself a cigarette. Then, suddenly the police came. There had just been a *quadrilha* (gang) roaming the neighbourhood making trouble in the area, and the police were determined to get them. But the police did not catch them. But instead of going away empty handed and defeated they decided to pick out some random victims. I and five other people were told to lay face down on the ground as they searched us. It wasn't just men, it was women too. Old and young, it didn't matter. The police didn't find anything and they knew that we had nothing to do with the *quadrilha*(gang). Nevertheless, they brought all of us to the police station and charged us with formação *de quadrilha* (gang-activity). In the police report it said that I had a firearm in my back pocket when they arrested me. Can you believe this? I had my *wallet* in my back pocket. They turned the wallet into a firearm! But you see, it didn't only happen to me. It was the same with all the others that were taken in.They put us in jail and kept us there for 50 days, because we were all poor Brazilians, all *negros da minha cor* (all were blacks with my skin colour). I didn't see an attorney, because I couldn't afford one. I still can't, so therefore I still have a criminal record. It really complicates my life. There are several places in town where I do not go. Take *Pelourinho* for instance. The police will do strip-search of anyone with my skin colour. For no other reason than having a dark skin colour. And the strip-search they do is very brutal and violent. What I always see is that if a black person and a white person do the same mistake the white person will always get away with it. It is a heritance from history. The whites are always on top of the hierarchy, they are the ones who dominate. This is the circumstance in which I was brought up. It should not be like this. Everyone is equal even if their skin colour is different. I want you to listen to this music by Adão Negro, this is just the way it is! He presses play and starts to sing along:

Disguised apartheid every day

When I look I do not see my self on TV

When I see me I am always in the kitchen

Or in the Favela submissive to power

I have been a slave but now I am *neguinha*

My little black girl we like you

Lift up your skirt, run to the bedroom in a hurry

At dawn the little master want to see you

Is it possible that I will become the master one day

I dream about this

To stay in the living room not needing to go to the kitchen

Now I will tell you what I see on TV

The *Negro* music

The *Negro* God

The *Negro* Adam

The *Negro* in power

The *Indío* in power

In this example above José believes that he was a victim of police violence. He said that the incident happened to him because he was a black and poor man in the wrong place at the wrong time. As we have seen in several of the statements earlier in this chapter discriminatory practices based on skin colour can be linked to what I have called economical prejudices towards blacks. There seems to be an automatic assumptions of economical status linked to skin colour. This further indicates that there is no clear-cut distinction between race and class, they are intertwined. In the previous data presented a lot of what my informants describe racism something that is not visible to the naked eye. It is encoded, yet everybody knows how it works. When racism operates in an almost invisible way it was sometimes hard to write field notes about racism. Feelings are hard to describe, and a lot of the time racism was something that you felt. It was there, but it was hard to put the finger on exactly what it was. My informants, as we have seen, point toward body language, *boa aparencia* and the job markets preference for white and none of these examples are overt. Because of these covert and subtle expressions for racism I became baffled over an incident that occurred one night in *Pelourinho*. This incident illustrates some subtle forms of racism that is at work, but also how

easily racism can be overlooked or dismissed as rude behaviour and nothing of importance from an outsider's point of view. I argue that the incident shows some of the prejudices that exists and what behaviour that is perceived as disrespectful and racist by my informants. The incident also gives an idea concerning the difference in respect and boundaries that operates between whites and blacks, and male and female in Brazil.

Iansã and I hurry along working our way past all the beggars, the aggressive street sellers and all the hordes of tourists that are slowly making their way through the narrow streets of the historical city centre. Now and then we get pushed forward as there are drum bands marching up and down, trying to compete with the other bands further up the squares. Iansã is tense and she has on several occasions told me that she feels like a commodity when she walks the streets of *Pelourinho*. The *morenas* (mulatto women) have for a very long time been perceived as sex symbols in Bahia (and Brazil), and even though Iansã sees herself as *negona* (a term that underlines her African descent) her skin colour is absolutely not of the darkest kind. She is a very attractive and graceful woman and she usually glows of self-esteem. However, as we enter this part of town she "tones" herself down. She walks rapidly with a distant facial expression and she crosses her arms and legs as we sit down at the little street bar where we have agreed to meet up with a friend. As we wait for him we decide to share a beer and after a couple of small glasses Iansã is starting to loosen up a bit. She sits with her back against the street and is focusing on how to best explain the way that racism works in Salvador. She talks about the *preconceitos* (prejudices) that whites hold against blacks and vice versa. She gives me endless stories about her going into shops and as a black she is denied any services. I get really worked up and ask her if this is really true, that as a black they can refuse to help her? She looks at me with a glimpse of hopelessness in her eyes, shakes her head and then she sighs. "Listen, the way that racism works her is not explicit", she says. "It is all in the body language, the looks and the prejudices." If she walks in to a store nobody can throw her out or tell her that she is not wanted. That is against the law. But as she walks around the clerks follow her every move and if she ask for the price they may, instead of answering the question, tell her that it is very expensive. "You see, they have an idea that all blacks are poor or that they only enter a store to rob them", she says and goes on to explain how she once got so provoked by a clerk's attitude that she ended up buying three similar necklaces just to prove that she wasn't poor.

As we are minding our own business and engaging in a very interesting conversation, the table next to us is occupied by a group of men. They are loud and noisy and have probably

already had a few drinks. They quickly take notice of us and two of the men grab two plastic chairs and joins us at our table, without asking if it bothers us. They are a group of dentists that are in town for some kind of congress, and are eager to let us know how impressed they are with Salvador. They are *gauchos* (term that describes people from the south of Brazil) and not at all familiar with the African inspired culture that is so present in this city.

"Everything is so beautiful, the *Bahianos* (people from the state of Bahia) are not as lazy as I have heard, and the women are breathtaking", one of them comments. After this statement the two men draw closer and now we start to feel a bit uncomfortable. At first I do not read much into the situation but as we repeatedly have to tell them in words and body language that we would like to be left alone, it becomes clear to me that Iansã and I are treated differently. We do exactly the same things to make them keep their distance, but after a while they respect my personal space and their conversation with me turns to a more respectful character. However it is apparent that this is not the case with Iansã. The more she tries to tell them off in a civilized manner the more they invade her personal space. The questions they ask her are rather rude and of a sexual character, and they touch her even when she signalizes that it clearly is the last thing in the world she is interested in. Several times she has to physically push one of the men away so he will not be all over her. As our male friend arrives, he quickly gestures to me that he finds the situation uncomfortable and rather threatening. The men ignore him and do not even give him an opportunity to sit down at the table. Iansã, anxious to get going, asks for the bill and as the waiter finally approaches the table he hands the bill to me. He does not even glance at the others in my group. There is an awkward silence between the three of us. I do not really know what to say as I feel that the waiter has confirmed the prejudice that as the only white person in the group I must be the one with the money.

I have here presented a glimpse of the subtle way that racism works in Brazil. In my opinion, it indicates some of the prejudices that exists and what behaviour that is perceived as disrespectful and racist. It also gives an idea concerning the difference in respect and limits that operates between whites and blacks, and male and female. There were different standards for me and Iansã. Whether this difference in treatment also could be contributed to me being a foreigner is an appropriate question. It is hard to deny that this is of no importance, especially in the context where I got the bill. Nevertheless, after seeing and hearing about several similar stories I do believe that this is a matter of skin colour (and internalized prejudices). I say this also as I often felt a difference in the way my "group" was treated when I would be with

people of a lighter skin colour. As I said I did not read much into the situation at first, but as it unfolded I could feel the tension rise with my informants. Their body language changed and so did the tone of their voice. As many social scientists have pointed out (Wade 1997, Reichmann 1999, Barcelos Rezende 2004) the way that racism works in Brazil is one of the reasons it has been overlooked as important by scientists focusing mainly on the class perspective

The statements that I have chosen to present above from some of my own informants illustrate that when talking about racism in Brazil they point towards arenas like body language, appearance and job market. They do not define physical or formal segregation between people with different skin colour as the only form of racism like the informants of Winddance Twine (1998). The preference for white seems like a paradox especially in a society that celebrates itself as a racial democracy. That the African population of Brazil were going to become whiter through miscegenation was a very popular ideology at the turn of the century as we saw in chapter 2. The ideology of *embranquecimento* (whitening) was a mean for Brazilian intellectuals and elite to handle the country's large African population within the paradigm of scientific racism. This means that the construction of the Brazilian nation was strongly influenced by a preference for white, and judging from the histories and conversations I have presented, and the findings of researcher like Goldstein (2003), Sheriff (2001) and Sansone (2003) (and many others), the whitening ideology has still got a grip on society. Today, like the time when Brazil as a nation was constructed, the elite is still dominated by whites. Theories on group identity usually argue that the elite possesses the power of definition (Eriksen 1998, Comraoff 1996). That is the power of defining which cultural or social markers are to be valorised within a particular context. This form of power is often subtle or invisible or in Bordieu's (1991) terminology a symbolic power, because the elite's power of definition is disguised within a strong feeling of "sameness". The debates on Brazilian race relations since the 1970s have centred on the national ideology of a racial democracy as a tool used by the elite's to disguise their power and the existence of racism in Brazil (Wade 2002). The mass media, especially TV as a powerful medium in shaping peoples ideas are fortifying the valorisation of whiteness. However, judging from my informants statements they do not take white supremacy for granted. By recognising racist practices like *boa aparencia* they question the hegemony. I argue that they acknowledge the value of whiteness in society and are able to see the consequences this preference for white can have for them as Afro-Brazilians. Particularly, in the job market where the *boa aparencia* could either exclude them

from a job, or at least mean that they would have to minimize or manipulate their African characteristics. Throughout this chapter I have tried to show that my infromants are not blind-folded in relation to racism.I argue that their consciousness about racism and racial discriminatio question the theories that see the myth of racial democracy as the only explanatory factor to why there is a lack of racial conflict and political mobilisation among Afro-brazilians. In the next chapter I will try to demonstrate how the black movement's explicit political use of blackness might bee another reason for why my self-identified *negro* informants are reluctant to become activists even though they are consciious about racism.

5. BLACK SPACES

In the previous chapter I accounted for what my informants perceive as racism and some of the arenas were this is expressed. I call those arenas white spaces, and by this I mean that in those situations and areas the implicit or explicit preference for white creates barriers for black people. In this chapter I will focus on what I call black spaces. Like Sansone (2003) I make an analytical distinction between implicit and explicit black spaces. He poses that *explicit* black spaces are places where being black is an advantage as opposed to *implicit* black spaces where being black is not an obstacle (Sansone 2003). For analytical purposes I, on the other hand, introduce another distinction that I cal neutral spaces. What Sansone (2003) calls implicit black spaces I label neutral spaces i.e. being black is not an obstacle, because I see them as arenas or situations where skin colour is of no importance. Neutral spaces can be leisure time activities like playing cards or drinking beer at the local *barzinho* (small bar), or going to a *pagode* (a type of samba) or a samba place. I will not focus on these neutral spaces. Further I also make a distinction between *explicit* and *implicit* black spaces. I see *implicit* black spaces as spaces where being black is an advantage, and *explicit* black spaces as spaces were being non-black is not only an obstacle, but also a disadvantage. In *explicit* black spaces blacks are in power and confront what they see as the white hegemony. The difference between the explicit and implicit black spaces, I argue, lies in how black identity is used politically. In the following I will present both an implicit and an explicit black space and how my informants relate to these spaces. Like Sansone (2003) I argue that my informants seek these places to openly express their blackness in a context where the blacks are in power. In these spaces (implicit and explicit black spaces) there is no stigma attached to blackness. On the contrary, these spaces (in particular the *blocos afro* (afro carnival associations) which I will present) are arenas were the *identidade negra* (black identity) is constructed. The distinction between spaces and places is analytical. I have chosen to use the term space because it is not the actual (solid) place that is important to me, rather it is the space that is created through human interaction, words, music and the use of the (black) body that is of interest to me.

IMPLICIT BLACK SPACES

The stairs of Geronimo

Situated in *Pelourinho*, but off the typical tourist track, there is a gigantic staircase leading up to the colonial church called *Igreja do Santíssimo Sacramento do Passo*. I call this place "the stairs of Geronimo", because every Tuesday the artist Geronimo and his salsa band hold a concert at these dimly lighted stairs. The band draws a large audience and even if some tourists manage to find their way, the crowd mostly consists of blacks in their 20s and 30s. The majority of these people have braided hair or big afros and their clothing is colourful, and accessorised with handmade necklaces and bracelets. People usually start to arrive long before the band starts to play and they stay on after the concert is finished. They drink beer and talk to friends and acquaintances catching up on the latest gossip. There is a high flirtatious factor and even after the concert starts people seldom sit at the same place for a long time. They wander up and down the stairs, mingling and networking. What makes this space different from other black spaces is that the music style is Salsa. This is one of the few places in Salvador, out of the many places and concerts I have been to, where the music is not Brazilian (samba, pagode) or afro-Brazilian (axé, afro-reggea, batuque). Salsa is not really a big thing in Salvador and those who do not know how to dance Salsa (the majority) improvise with sensual movements and dance steps from *axé music* (axé means soul in Yoruba) or afro-reggae music. Towards the end of the concert Geronimo always hold an appeal. The topics of the appeals are centred on the importance of *candomblé* (and as we remember from chapter 3 this is the core of Afro-Bahian culture), self-esteem and the fight against racism.

The stairs of Geronimo is an important arena for my self-identified *negro* informants and their Tuesday evening is regularly spent at these stairs. I see this event as a black space as it is a leisure time activity in a place where being black is not a hindrance. I further argue that it is an *implicit* black space because here being black is an advantage even though skin colour is not of utter most importance in this space. Here, of course, it could be argued that the lack of importance regarding skin colour could classify this space as neutral. That the crowd largely consists of young blacks is not what makes it a black space, because the majority of the population in Salvador is black and brown. My reasons for labelling it a black space is that in addition to being a place where being black is no barrier it is also a place where my informants go to express their blackness. What is of importance to my informants is that first of all it is a place where they meet up with friends and where they interact with other blacks

that live by the same lifestyles and share their attitudes. My informants are very conscious of how they present themselves on these evenings. They never wear dirty clothes and especially my female informants spend a considerably amount of time getting dressed for the occasion. On Tuesday afternoons I would usually meet up with Iansã as she finished her capoeira practice. We would climb up the steep hills until we reached her two bed room home situated on a *morro* (Sheriff 2001 defines morro as shantytown settlement on a hillside). After an hour or so relaxing and chatting in the hammock on her small veranda, Iansã would prepare some food for us before she hit the shower. When she re-emerged she would try out her entire wardrobe (which was not really extensive) and combining different outfits with pieces of her own home-made jewellery. At the end of this little ritual, when she finally decided what to wear, she would walk up to the mirror, then turn her head to me and proclaim: "now I look like a *negona*!" (literally meaning big *negra*). She usually ended up with something colourful and simple, like a bright yellow batik dress and sandals accompanied with a necklace and bracelets. She would always wear something that accentuated her sensuality.

As I argued in chapter 3 the *negro* identity has to do with lifestyles and attitudes. Some of my informants, like many other young blacks in Salvador express their blackness through visual markers like hair, body language, and clothing. This distinguishes them from non-blacks and the traditional Afro-Bahian culture (Sansone 2003). But it does not mean that having big afro hair or colourful clothing is a must in order to call oneself *negro*. Like any other culture, or group etc. it is heterogeneity between the members and one can perfectly well consider oneself *negro* without the use of such markers. Among my informants there were some which did not put any effort into visual markers. On the other hand there were some that put a lot of effort into their appearance. What was common for all my female self identified *negro* informants was that none of them went to the hairdresser to straighten out their hair. Among other female informants that did not self-identify as *negros* the percentage of those who went to the hairdresser in that errand was very high. Straight hair is considered a marker of European ancestry. In the example above we can see that the construction of blackness in this space is clearly concerned with fashion. The stairs of Geronimo is a place where the blacks show off the latest trends and ways to dress in black fashion As such a place where conspicuous consumption (i.e. obtain or acquire things to give an impression of who you are (Eriksen 1998)), becomes a part of a negotiation of black beauty. In "Racism in a racial democracy" Winddance Twine (1998) is concerned with the lack of support for anti-racist movements among afro-Brazilians. She argues that her studies in Vasalia, (a small town in

south-eastern Brazil) shows that Afro-Brazilians do not in any way perceive African characteristics like kinky hair, large noses and black skin as beautiful. Her informants, she argues, is just as embedded as non-blacks in the aesthetic hierarchy which places white and European at top. There is, in Vasalia, no alternative hierarchy of beauty that is contesting the dominant white beauty ideals (Winddance Twine 1998). On the contrary, her Afro-Brazilian informants actively seek lighter skin partner in order to have lighter skin children. She argues that white supremacy is maintained through the ideology of *embranquecimento* (whitening) and together with the ideology of *mestiçagem* (mixedness) and the myth of racial democracy the Afro-Brazilians are rendered unconscious about racism. She says that a lack of an alternative aesthetic hierarchy and unconsciousness regarding racism as some of the factors that hinders afro-Brazilians in supporting anti-racist movements. Originally, Winddance Twine (1998) wanted to see what constituted an act of racism and anti-racism in Brazil. She found an abundance of racist acts from her point of view, (she is an African-American anti-racist activist), but anti-racist acts were absent from the lives of her working class Afro-Brazilian informants.

I have already argued in the previous chapters that my informants are conscious of racism (see chapter 4) and that self-identifying as *negro* is both a strategy to cope with everyday racism and a way of questioning white hegemony (chapter 3). Hopefully I have managed to convey that among the black and brown population in Salvador white supremacy is no doxa to use Bordieus terminology. Bordieus definition of doxa is "commonsense assumptions about the world through which individuals interpret and make sense out of events" (Bordieu 1977:159 in Winddance Twine 1998:66). Here I argue that implicit black spaces, like the stairs of Geronimo, are spaces where attitudes towards racial discrimination are expressed. It is an anti-racist arena because the appeals held by Geronimo often centres on racism and anti racism. Further the emphasis on black pride and black beauty symbols help create a new aesthetical hierarchy that contest the one found in white spaces where white and European is at the top of the hierarchy. So far in this chapter I have tried to show how fashion and beauty plays a role in the construction of blackness among my informants as well as other young blacks in Salvador. This emphasis on fashion however does not mean that traditional Afro-Bahian culture is less important. In the following I will give an example of a black space where black fashion is combined with an emphasis on traditional Afro-Bahian culture.

EXPLICIT BLACK SPACES

Blocos Afro (Afro Carnival associations)

In the following I will present two *blocos afro* (Ilê Aiyê and Olodum) because these are what I consider *explicit* black spaces i.e. spaces were being non-black is not only an obstacle, but also a disadvantage. The *blocos afro* of *Ilê Aiyê* and *Olodum* are some of the black spaces where my informants go to get inspiration and recognition for their blackness. I will present my first meeting with *Ilê Aiyê* followed by one of the days I spent with *Olodum* during carnival. Venturing into the *afro blocos* means entering into the world of *movimento negro* (the black Brazilian movement). In these spaces the black identity is constructed by cultural expressions held to be African. The *afro blocos* are closely related to traditional afro-Bahian culture, but it is distinguished because of the explicit political use of *identidade negra* (black identity).

In chapter 3 we saw that Telles (1999) contributed the particularly high level of a feeling of a common identity among Afro-Brazilians in Salvador to residential segregation and *afro blocos*. One such residentially isolated area is *Liberdade* (Freedom) with its more than 600 000 inhabitants. This neighbourhood is known to the locals as the "blackest" neighbourhood in Salvador, but it is also famous for being the home of the *Afro Bloco Ilê Aiyê*. All of my self-identified *negro* informants held this *Afro Bloco* and the *Liberdade*-community to be the most authentic African. *Ilê Aiyê* was created as a carnival group and since the beginning until today they only allow blacks to follow them during carnival. Originally they gave an option to the black population who were not allowed to participate with other *blocos* (*bloco* is a general term used to describe a carnival association group). Today they continue to keep the rule of "non-white" participation during carnival as a mean of resistance and to give fuel to the debate on racism in Brazil. According to my informants *Ilê Aiyê* is said to be where they cultivate and preserve the real *raizes* (roots) of the *identidade negra* (the black identity). It is also considered one of the most important and a "heavy weight"- entity of *Movimento Negro* in Brazil. In the following I will give an empirical description of my first experience with this particular *Bloco Afro*. *Ilê Aiyê* works to strengthen the self esteem among the black population and a sense of a common identity based on a common history of oppression.

Ilê Aiyê: A casa dos negros (the house of negros)

It is about ten o'clock at night when the taxi turns left from the main road and heads into a narrow alley. Everyone was singing and joking before, but suddenly we are all quiet and the taxi driver tells us to roll up the windows. We are looking out on the badly illuminated neighbourhood and registering every movement from the few, brave people that are walking along the empty streets. They walk rapidly in the middle of the street, turn their heads and walk on to the pavement as our car approaches. When they see the taxi sign on the roof of the car it is almost as if they relax a little bit, lowering their shoulders and keep on walking at a lower pace. As soon as our car has passed by they walk into the middle of the street again. The houses on each side are only one or two stories high, made of brick and none of them are painted. A few of the houses have lights, but mostly they are all dark. They are crammed together and on the street corners one can see dogs going through large piles of rubbish.

There is no one to be seen outside on the front stairs or in the windows, but now and then we can see *barzinhos* (small bars). The customers are all blacks or afro Brazilians drinking beer, singing and dancing behind the iron bars that surrounds the small "pubs". The axé-music, so typical for the state of Bahia, blasts out into the night in the otherwise silent neighbourhood. This neighbourhood, called *Liberdade* (freedom), used to be a *quilombo* (a community founded by slaves that escaped their masters and offered resistance). Today it is the largest neighbourhood in the city of Salvador and it has the highest percentage of blacks.

The taxi is driving slowly because of all the holes in the winding streets and as we turn around a corner a huge seven story building stands in sharp contrast to the surrounding neighbourhood. It rises up with all its light and bright colours. It is painted in bright yellow and red. Above the main entrance there is a row of African inspired ornaments making up a kind of belt that wraps around the building. The repeated ornament is an abstract black head with "ILÊ AIYÊ" written in red and symbolically being the eyes. The mouth is big and bright red and clearly illustrates one of the most typical markers of the phenotype "o Negro". "Welcome to the blackest neighbourhood in Salvador", says Oxumaré nodding his head and stretching out his arms. We have arrived at *ILÊ AIYÊ* (in Yoruba and means the house of the *negro*). Tonight they will launch their carnival theme for 2006: "O negro e o poder" (The *negro* and the power). As we jump out of taxi the others constantly look over their shoulders and to each side as they drag me through the crowd. Iansã clutches her purse tight under her arm and tells me to hurry up. The big security guard lets us through the two metre tall iron

gates, passes a metal detector around our bodies and then we start climbing the stairs together with a crowd of people. On the top of the stairs there is a large patio where people get together in small groups. They stand in small circles, sipping from cans of beer, chatting to one another, laughing and eating *espetinho de churrasco* (small pieces of meat or chicken on a stick dipped in a kind of yellow flour). It smells of grilled food from the small stalls in the corners of the patio and the sound of all the people is reaching a level where it is difficult to hear what my informants are trying to tell me. Suddenly we hear beatings from a single drum and the crowd slowly starts to make their way into the building following the music. As we reach the bottom of another stairway, a room approximately the size of two football fields, opens up in front of us. At the rear end there is a stage where several different kinds of drums are placed along side one another and one man is playing a steady beat with his hands while some others are walking back and forth making sure that all the equipment is in place. Above the stage hangs a large yellow flag with the painted portrait of "Mãe Hilda" (Mor Hilda), she is the female head of the *candomblé* house in this neighbourhood and guardian of *Ilê Aiyê*. She is also the mother of the president of *Ilê Aiyê*.

The walls are painted deep red and on each side of the room there are several pillars that support the overhanging corridors which are restricted for VIP's only. Downstairs there is one bar at each side of the room, but to get something to drink you first have to buy coupons from a hole in the wall. All the windows are open but there is no circulation of air. People are pouring into the room and after a short while our clothes are clinging to our bodies and people are constantly wiping away sweat from their foreheads. The women wear high heals, short skirts and colourful tops, or long colourful dresses and sandals. They wear hand-made jewellery, carry small purses and the hair is braided in all imaginable afro styles. The men also have braided or big curly hair. They wear jeans or trousers and colourful t-shirts or tunics. As the women, they all hold their heads high and try to find a place close to the stage. Most of the people look like they are about 20-30 years old.

After a short while the band enters the stage wearing tunics made up of different kinds of colourful rectangular prints sown together. As the drumming gets louder three women dance on to the stage with gliding movements. They too wear dresses in a similar fabric. Their dresses are made up of layer by layer around the waist and down to the floor, like the dancing participants in *candomblé* sessions. The women on stage dance bare feet and on the head they wear the fabric almost as a turban. Their bodies are bent forward and they throw their arms up and down, from side to side as they "float" around on the stage. By the African-inspired

rhythms of the drums they seem to fall into an almost trance-like dance and the men sing with powerful voices. Some of the words are in Yoruba, an African language that has survived as the language of *candomblé* (afro Brazilian religion). The songs are about how important it is to raise the self-esteem amongst the black Brazilians and how powerful their African roots are. It is also about the stigmatization of blacks and institutional racism in the Brazilian society. The struggle against racism and those in the society that "holds them down" are other recurring themes. As the band keeps on playing, Oxumaré, like most of the people in the room, starts to dance. Like him, everyone seems to know this trance-like dance. They dance for themselves and Oxumaré starts to swing his arms in some wavelike movements and he almost falls to one side and then to the other. He looks at Iansã as she too starts to dance with her eyes closed. She kicks off her sandals and sings along to the music as she is swirling around on the floor.

As I argued in the beginning of this chapter *Ilê Aiyê* is an *explicit* black space, and as we can see in the example presented it is closely connected to the traditional Afro-Bahian culture. Here everything that is considered black is celebrated through music, dance and appearance. The beat of the drums gives strong connotations to the beats that are used in *candomblé* sessions, and the way the people dance are also inspired by the movements used in *candomblé*. The lyrics describe racism in Brazil and how the black population is subjected to it. Many of the words are in Yoruba language, a language that is said to have survived through the practice of *candomblé*. The lyrics urge people to be conscious of their position in society and to be proud of their blackness. In chapter 3 I argued that the core symbol of traditional Afro-Bahian culture is *candomblé*, and as we can see from the example above, it is at the heart of *Ilê Aiyê*. The music, the dance and the clothing are all inspired by *candomblé*. The reason for this focus on *candomblé* most probably is that it is perceived to be of authentic African origin. The assumed authenticity of cultural expressions is exactly why my informants look at *Ilê Aiyê* as the place where real African roots are cultivated. On the surface the differences between "the stairs of Geronimo" and *Ilê Aiyê* as black spaces might not be very apparent. In both of the spaces celebration of blackness is at the core of the event. The difference, I argue, is that in the type of black space that I have exemplified in "the stairs of Geronimo" (an *implicit* black spaces) the celebration of blackness is centred on lifestyles, beauty symbols and attitudes. Black pride is seen and constructed as a mean to confront everyday racism, but there is no talk of black superiority. I see this as a more modern way of constructing blackness than what is the case at *Ilê Aiyê*. In the case of explicit black spaces,

here exemplified in *Ilê Aiyê*, there is also a celebration of black beauty. As we saw in the example the crowd at *Ilê Aiyê* was also dressed in colourful and African-inspired clothes and many had braided hair or afro hair. What distinguishes this space is the political aspect. Before I go on to discuss the different political dimensions and the consequences of this I will present another empirical example of an explicit black space.

Black superiority: ancient Egypt

Carnival is an important event for *blocos afro* like *Ilê Aiyê* and *Olodum*. This is the time when they take to the street and get a chance to show their political and cultural agenda to a large audience. *Olodum* is another *bloco afro* that attracts a lot of people during carnival. They became internationally known after doing several recordings with known musicians like Michael Jackson, Paul Simon, Jimmy Cliff and others (http://www.cliquemusic.com.br/en/Artists/Artists.asp?Status=ARTIST&Nu_Artista). Their music style differs from Ilê Aiyê and is called "Afro reggae". Besides being a percussion band they also have various social projects for kids in different *favelas* (shanty towns) in Salvador. Olodum was founded in 1979 by musicians from another carnival band in Salvador. Since their debut as a *bloco afro* in the 1980 carnival they have focused on historical themes related to Afro-Brazilian roots (http://www.cliquemusic.com.br/en/Artists/Artists.asp?Status=ARTIST&Nu_Artista). Every year they pick a theme for carnival that mirrors their African heritage and makes a statement. The carnival theme for 2005 is ancient Egypt and instead of a simple *abadá* (shirt that allows you to participate with the *bloco*) they have *fantasias* (costumes). I wait impatiently together with two of my informants for *Olodum* to enter the *bloco*. Like everyone else waiting we are dressed in our *fantasias*; the women in a yellow dress with a huge portrait of the Egyptian queen "Nefertiti" and a blue head piece similar to the one that is shown on her portrait. The men have a blue head piece typically worn by the faraos in the ancient Egypt. They have a yellow shirt with a white collar and the portrait of the farao "Akhnaton". Around the waist they have yellow lend cloth with hieroglyphs in front. All of us, dressed in yellow are suppose to represent the slaves in the hierarchy of ancient Egypt. In front of the *bloco* are three rows made up of about thirty dancers. They too are waering clothes similar to ours, but their *fantasias* are more elaborate than ours. The men have black head pieces, a blue lend cloth, no shirt but a black collar decorated with fake gems. The female dancers wear white dresses and black headpieces. All of the dancers also have bracelets made from card board

and painted with gold-paint. When the band finally arrive they are dressed in the same way as us, but they have black trousers, black collars with fake emeralds and white headpieces with golden stripes.

Since the band is so large they walk on the ground together with us. They all have to carry their own drum which can vary in size from a fairly small one to an enormous that they carry in a strap over their shoulder or waist and have to push forward with their thigh when they walk. The ones with the smaller drums form the front rows behind the "triolectrico" (bus with enormous loud speaker and neon lighting) while the ones with larger drums form the back. All the drums are black and have the logo of *Olodum* either on the side or on the drum skin. Apart from a few most of the musicians are black. They have braided afro hair in all styles. Their drum sticks are formed as colourful clubs and it looks like the musicians have to use a lot of strength each time they hit the drum skin. Now and then they throw the clubs rotating high up in sky. It is all carefully choreographed. The singer stands at the back of the *triolectrico*. In front of the *triolectrico* stands a big, black man. He is dressed in golden robe with an emerald green hat similar to that of "Nefertiti", but with a snake in front. He constantly dances with the moves of *candomblé*-dance. He is supposed to represent the high priest of ancient Egypt. Together with him is an older couple also dressed in golden robes and the man is holding a golden sceptre in his hand. They represent queen "Nefertiti" and Farao "Akhnaton" and twice they come down from the *triolectrico* surrounded by security guards to show themselves to *o povo* (the people). The point of choosing the ancient Egypt as a carnival theme is to show what they see as historical, black superiority. They want to draw attention to the hierarchy of the Faraos where the blacks where the powerful and intelligent rulers. This is also a way to make a statement about Africa not only being the continent of slaves, but of ancient high culture.

I have tried to show my self-identified *negro* informants actively seek *implicit* black spaces like "the stair of Geronimo" and *explicit* black spaces like *Ilê Aiyê* and *Olodum* as spaces where they comfortably play out their blackness. Here they do not have to worry about being stigmatized or discriminated against because these are spaces where *identidade negra* (black identity) is constructed. There is, however, a political aspect in both the implicit and the explicit black spaces. As I said in chapter 3 the personal identification as *negro* is on an implicit level a political statement, because it recognises the history of blacks as a marginalised group. The self-reflection around *negro* identity means that one is political conscious. In the explicit black spaces however, the political aspect is made explicit. I argue

that when *negritude*(blackness) and the *negro* identity is made explicitly political it breaks with the ideology and the reality of *mestiçagem*(mixedness), because it creates a dichotomy where white and black is opposing each other (Sansone 2003). The white (elite) becomes *the other*, and as I have already said *Ilê Aiyê* has a rule of non-white participation during carnival. The carnival theme of black superiority that *Olodum* launched in 2005 was, in my opinion, a powerful message against the hegemony they see as build on white supremacy. Here I will go a litter deeper into the political realm of *Ilê Aiyê* and the black movement. *Ilê Aiyê* was founded 1st. of November 1974 as a *bloco* that perform on the streets during carnival. Their goal is to preserve, valorise and expand the Afro-Brazilian culture (Ilê Aiyê 2006). In doing so, they have paid tribute to African countries, nations and cultures and to the black revolts in Brazil that, according to *Ilê Aiyê*, contributed greatly to the process of fortifying the *negro* identity and heighten the self-esteem of the Brazilian *negro* (Ilê Aiyê 2006). Like *Olodum* they focus on popular themes of African history in the angle of the history of the *negro* in Brazil, and in this way constructing a common past *or uma linha historica da negritude* (a historical line of blackness) (http://www.ileaiye.com.br/index2.htm).Today *Ilê Aiyê* is one of the most important institutions, both culturally and politically, of the Black Movement in Salvador. I later returned to *Ilê Aiyê* to a scheduled meeting with a representative for the *bloco.* He is dressed in a blue tunic with golden embroidery around the neck and loosely fitted black trousers when I meet him in his office. "Welcome to the "Senzala of the black neighbourhood"", he says "we call it *Senzala* because it is where the slaves were held and where they cultivated and preserved their religion; the *candomblé*. But *candomblé* is not only a religion; it is also a form of social organization". Even though we are interrupted all the time he answers my question regarding the importance of history by stating that: "To be an individual and to know yourself it is important to know your history". He explains that what the band was wearing the night when I was there, were tunics made up of different kinds of colourful rectangular prints sown together. The point is that each print was in fact a painting that tells a history. "It is the history seen through our eyes, not the eyes of the white man", he says and continues with "It is necessary that the power in this country is divided between all those which have competence. We all know that this is not the way it works in reality" Ilê's carnival theme for 2006 was *O Negro e O poder* (The Negro and the Power) where they focused on successful and famous black. To get black into positions of power is now becoming a long term goal for *Ilê Aiyê* and the black movement. The idea for the carnival theme was to present different successful and famous black personalities from different countries, historical eras and different areas extending from religion and sports to national and

international politics. Among them are people like Pelé, Kofi Annan, Benedita da Silva and Nelson Mandela. According to my informant at *Ilê Aiyê* the movement has until now fought their battles mostly on the cultural ground, through music, cultural events and carnival. They have been successful in "changing the face of the city" in relation to beauty symbols and the gradual increase in self esteem and racial consciousness for the black population of Salvador. Dread locks and braided hair are no longer as stigmatizing as earlier and many blacks wear fabrics, head bands and other items strongly influenced by African art and culture. Nowadays, *Ilê Aiyê* is more focused on taking their struggle to the political realm and mobilising the black population politically. During my fieldwork the black movement was celebrating the implementation of a system of affirmative action at the federal university in Salvador (UFBA). The black movement in Salvador played a key role in pressuring the university to implement the quotas, and in the aftermath they see the system as one of their greatest political achievements. My search for answers to why my informants, despite their awareness of racism, did not want to become member of the black movement led me to take a closer look at the movement. As I described in the introduction chapter it was not easy to gain access to the inner core of the movement and this will of course be reflected in the kind of data I have obtained and will present in the following. In the following I will present some points of views on the importance of affirmative actions. These statements are collected from various representatives from different groups of the black movement.

System of the quotas as a political goal

From January to march 2006 the media was filled with debates, articles and interviews concerning the implementation of affirmative action at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA). The theme was always introduced by the media as highly polemic and there was certainly no lack of aggravated stories from students that were denied access to the university because students with the rights quotas had "taken their place".

Iroko, my key informant from the movement, embarks on the issue of affirmative action by stating that "the quotas are very, very important for several reasons". The policy of affirmative action is the first real official step towards an arena where the issue of racism can be debated. It is also the first real acknowledgement ever on behalf of any government that Brazil might not be an actual racial democracy even though the society indulges itself in this illusion. Education and experience is what shapes people and the quotas are a tool that finally will make the *negros* true citizens of Brazil

"As qotas é uma resposta da consciência negra"(the quotas is a response to black consciousness), says Helena. She continues by explaining that since the majority of Salvador's population is black you will see them in all public places; on the bus, in the street, on the beach etc. They are present in the public space. But, according to Helena, there are also many closed and confined places in this city where only the whites can move freely. In her opinion, the whites and the blacks are definitely not treated as equals in this society.

"It is the most racist society that I know", she says, "the principle of race is dominating, but the way racism is played out is subtle and *safadinha* (a little devilish)". Helena argues that is nothing normal about a society where about 80 % of the population is black, but their presence is lacking at the university. Before the quotas there were only 2 or 3 black students in a class, she explains, and the more prestigious the faculty is the less black students you will find. My own observation coincides with Helena's statement and I was very surprised at the small numbers of black students I encountered at the different faculties. The percentages of black students however were larger at faculties like social science than on more prestigious ones like medicine and administration. There I hardly saw a black student, and the ones I saw, with a couple of exceptions, did not were clothes or have hairstyles associated with afro-Brazilian culture. When asked about the introduction of quotas as a polemic theme Helena lined out the pros and cons for me in a very black and white manner: "The people who are pro quotas are "conscious" about the historical process of the formation of the Brazilian society. The ones who knows and understands the history of the *negros*; slavery, colonization and the abolition. They know that slavery was formally abolished with the "lei aurea" in 1888, but the black population was still denied education and as such they did not become full citizens of Brazil. They did not become participants in the society. They were free from slavery, but the ex-slaves were not prepared to deal with life in a capitalistic and brutal society. People who truly understand the situation of today and the consequences of this historical process are conscious and as such they are for the quotas. They have a political and historical consciousness".

"On the other hand", Helena says, "you have the people that are against the quotas, namely the whites and a few blacks that are not conscious. They are the ones that fight for the maintenance of the privileges that the whites always have had. With the introduction of the quotas they were horrified and many went through the justice system in order to get back what they meant were taken away from them. For them the process was unfair, and they sought the help of the courts to get into university anyway. Very few succeeded. People that

are against the quotas will not admit that the society is highly racist and they will not admit to the problem. These are often the people who see the Brazilian society as divided by the class principle. You need not look very far to find people that see the system of quotas as unfair. Some people actually try to convince black people that the quotas will discredit them and discriminate them even more". "You see", Helena says" they will say that the black university students will be perceived as less gifted and intelligent".

After the implementation of the system Affirmative Action there were several new support groups established at the university and the black movement saw it as their task to make sure that the *afroaprovados* (students approved by quotas) were not subjected to racism or discrimination. There were meetings held to discuss the situation, the victory and new political challenges. Cristiano, a black movement student representative emphasises that the implementation of the quotas is just a small part of what has be done in order to deal with the institutionalized racism at academia. The implementation of affirmative action has given *negros* access to UFBA, and now the work has to directed towards how to make the *afroaprovados* (students approved by quotas) remain at university and complete their degrees. The group he represents also works for a change in the curriculum, and to include work of *negro* authors. Not only authors from Africa, but also from African Diasporas. He says that it is also important to educate more black professors as they are very scarce. Besides this the group he represents is working against racism in institutional processes, and their criteria to membership are both ideological as well as dependent on being a *negro*. They support organisational forms based on African principles. Not just from Africa, but also from the African Diasporas. "The university is a place of diversity, but in the case of Brazil the diversity is missing", he says "it is still the white literature and what is regarded as important by the white elite that dominate". The Affirmative Action then is not just about the quotas, but also to create changes in race relation and what is being produced academically. The Affirmative Action is clearly about social inclusion, but also about terminology and ideology. There is no doubt that a lot of the social inequalities found in Brazil can be explained by class differences. But there is more than that and the class society is interwoven with race relations. Everything is linked together and everything has colour. "Work has colour, education has colour etc. but the race issue is not just a question of colour. It is also a question of power", Cristiano states.

To summarise the view of the black movement regarding affirmative action, for them it is seen as a great victory in the struggle for social justice and an important step on the way to *reparacão* (repairing) the damages of slavery. It is also important because it officially denies the myth of racial democracy and creates an arena for debate on social inequality and discrimination. The goal of the government is to minimize social inequality but for the movement it is also seen as the means that will make the *negros* citizens in their own society. With the black population becoming higher educated and more conscious they will also occupy more positions of power and be more influential in society. With carnival themes like the ancient Egypt and *O Negro e O poder* (the *negro* and power) the black movement of Salvador is clearly signalising their next political goals.

According to (Reichmann 1999), the Brazilian black movement's official version the *negro* "acknowledges and welcomes African identity, embracing Africa's cultural contributions to Brazilian life" (Reichmann 1999:11). By constructing the political subject, the *Negro*, the Black Brazilian movement has brought political attention to racial discrimination and social stigmatization of blacks. It is meant to encompass the African cultural legacy and help make the Afro-Brazilians be more conscious about their marginalised position in society. One of the main reasons for the construction of the *Negro* was, according to Reichmann (1999) to facilitate political mobilization along racial lines and make the politicians take in to consideration racial discrimination as part of the production and reproduction of social inequality. The *Negro* as a socially constructed political term is meant to heighten the subjects' notion of a common origin. To assume the identity one has to identify with the subjugation of the black population in Brazil, regardless of one's personal status or economical recourses. To declare oneself *Negro* one must see oneself as part of a socially excluded and historically marginalized group and a representative of the afro Brazilian contribution to Brazilian religious-and cultural-life (Reichmann 1999). The common ground for the *Negros* as a group is then marginalization and social exclusion at the same time as their contribution to national culture and religion affirms that they are equally respected citizens. By constructing a political subject like the *Negro* the black movement has taken a highly stigmatized term with connotations to slavery, submission and inferiority, and made it into a symbol of resistance and solidarity. Or as Melissa Nobles puts it; "In Brazil (...) blackness and homosexuality are highly stigmatized identities, ones that are not easily assumed or embraced" (Nobles in Reichmann 1999:12). She draws an analogy between the Brazilian Black movement and gay/lesbian movements in the U.S. as she argues that the

movements have attempted to de-stigmatize these identities to build their agenda up on them. She further states that this is a way of recast boundaries "which set the stage for demands of obligation, allegiance and accountability to a group identity (Nobles in Reichmann 1999: 12). I argue that the Brazilian Black movement's construction of the "Negro" is a way of naturalizing African origin "as a primordial ground for celebration and solidarity (…)" (Reichmann 1999:12). This primordialistic approach makes the "Negro" seem like an authentic historical identity. It under communicates the political aspect and that the main reason for the construction is political mobilization that targets public policies (Reichmann 1999). This is a way of using racial identities in the creation of a politics of difference (Comaroff 1996) to reach political goals.

From the above account of the the black movement's official definition of *negro* we can see that my self-declared *negro* informants are largly agreeing with this definition as we saw in chapter 3. Still they do not wish to be activists in the more established and political parts of the Black movement. My informants participate in cultural events and seek different arenas where they can express their blackness, but frequent comments like "the people from the movement (i.e. the political activists) are the most racists" express their reluctance to join the political part of the movement. There is a discrepancy between my self-identified negro informants and the black movement.

DISCREPANCY

In the previous chapter I showed examples of racism as described by my self-identified negro informants. As I have already argued it indicates that these Afro-Brazilians are not unconscious about the existence of discrimination on the basis of skin colour. This seems to contradict a lot of research that has concluded that the ideology of racial democracy is all too powerful and hinders the black population in seeing the racist practices they are subjucated to Hanchard 1994, Winndance Twine 1998). The target group of *movimento negro* is the black population at large. So the question becomes: why my informants and others like them do not wish to participate in a political mobilisation along racial lines despite their counscieness about racism? Racism is concerned with exclusion and inclusion (Wade 2002), and in the case of *Ilê Aiyê* and the black movements there is a concern with including blacks while excluding whites (See Helenas statements above) In this space being non-black is a disadvantage. My non-black (non-*negro*) informants said that they did not go to *Ilê Aiyê* because they did not feel comfortable. They felt people glare at them and clearly wishing them to go away. Like

Gilberto (a non-black man in his late 20s) said: "it is just too much Africa". I believe that the focus on white as an opposition is what makes my black informants reluctant to join the black movement. When I argued in chapter 3 that the *negro* identity is not an ethnic identity one of the arguments was that if the *negro* identity was ethnic it would mean that many of my informants would have to see themselves as ethnically different than from their family members. My self-identified *negro* informants absolutely adore the cultural events of *afro blocos* like *Ilê Aiyê* and as we saw in the example presented above Oxumaré and Iansã really seemed to enjoy themselves. However, they do not embrace the explicit political use of the *negro* identity. *Ilê Aiyê* is considered one of the leading institutions of the black movement and the leadership are important members of the black community. As I have already pointed out the black community in Salvador is a relatively small elite consisting of black activists. Even though my informants always expressed an admiration for *Ilê Aiyê* as a place where the black identity was cultivated they drew a line between the cultural part and the political part of the *Ilê Aiyê* and black activists at large. They always emphasised their reluctance to participate in black activism. Here I have argue that the reason why my informants do not embrace the explicit political use of the black identity again has to do with the reality of miscegenation. My informants can not (and will not) see their white friends and family members as the reason for blacks being a marginalised group. This would make them racists, and as I have argued earlier they use the negro identity as a mean against racism. I think that my informants use the negro identity to mediate (DaMatta 1995) between the explicit political use of blackness represented by the black movement on one side, and the reality in which they live where many of their family and friends are non-black. In choosing to be negro in an implicit political way they continue to mediate between poles instead of breacking the mediating logic of Brazil (DaMatta 1995).

6. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

This dissertation is concerned with why there are no overt racial conflicts and little interest in political mobilisation along racial lines in Brazil. Based on fieldwork from Salvador da Bahia, this dissertation has sought to shed some light on this key question that social scientists on racial relations in Brazil seek to answer. By presenting my informant's views on racism, their way of resistance and their attitudes toward blackness, I have tried to show throughout this dissertation that my Afro-Brazilina *negro* informants are conscious of racism. So, in my opinion lack of consciousness is not the sole reason for the lack of racial conflicts and political mobilisation. Goldstein (2003) along with Ferreira da Silva (2004) seems to suggest that part of the reason is that blacks "know their place in society". That means that they are acutely aware of the barriers, like for example *boa aparencia*, that hinders social mobility. What is more is that both Goldstein (2003) and Sheriff (2001) in a convincingly manner show us that their informants (poor, working class afro-Brazilians) are not unconscious about racism. What seems to differ between my informants and theirs though is that my group of informants are all proud of being *negro*. This of course has to bee seen in relation to the fact that Salvador is "the cradle of Afro Brazilian culture". My informants do not minimize or manipulate their African characteristics to better fit into a hierarchy of aesthetics where white and European is at the top, on the contrary, they maximize their blackness. That the black movement has its stronghold in Salvador probably has a lot to do with this and as such the *movimento negro* (the black movement) has achieved some of the goals of their consciousness raising strategies. However, there is something that stops people like my informants from joining the movement. It seems to be a momentous task for the black movment to organize political mobilisation when we see that people like my informants do not wish to directly participate in their politics. I do not believe that my Afro-Brazilian self-identified *negro* informants are reluctant to become political activists because they "know about their place in society".

As I have argued in this dissertation none of these informants have ever appeared to me as "defeated" or in acceptance of their subjugated position. Neither did I see them act out their blackness different in different contexts (although I could of course not be with them at all times). My point is that these people know their rights and most of them are way above the average education level in Brazil. I have tried to show that they embrace the notion of black as beautiful and they are proud of their kinky hair and flat noses. In my opinion, based on my

data, the discrepancy between my informants and the black movements lie in the latter's explicit political use of blackness. This creates a break in the ideology of mixedness and the mediating logic that, according to DaMatta, are fundamental characteristics for the Brazilian society.

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